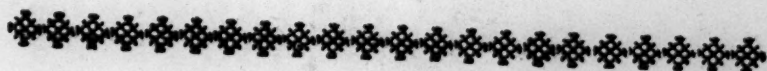


L E T T E R S

FROM

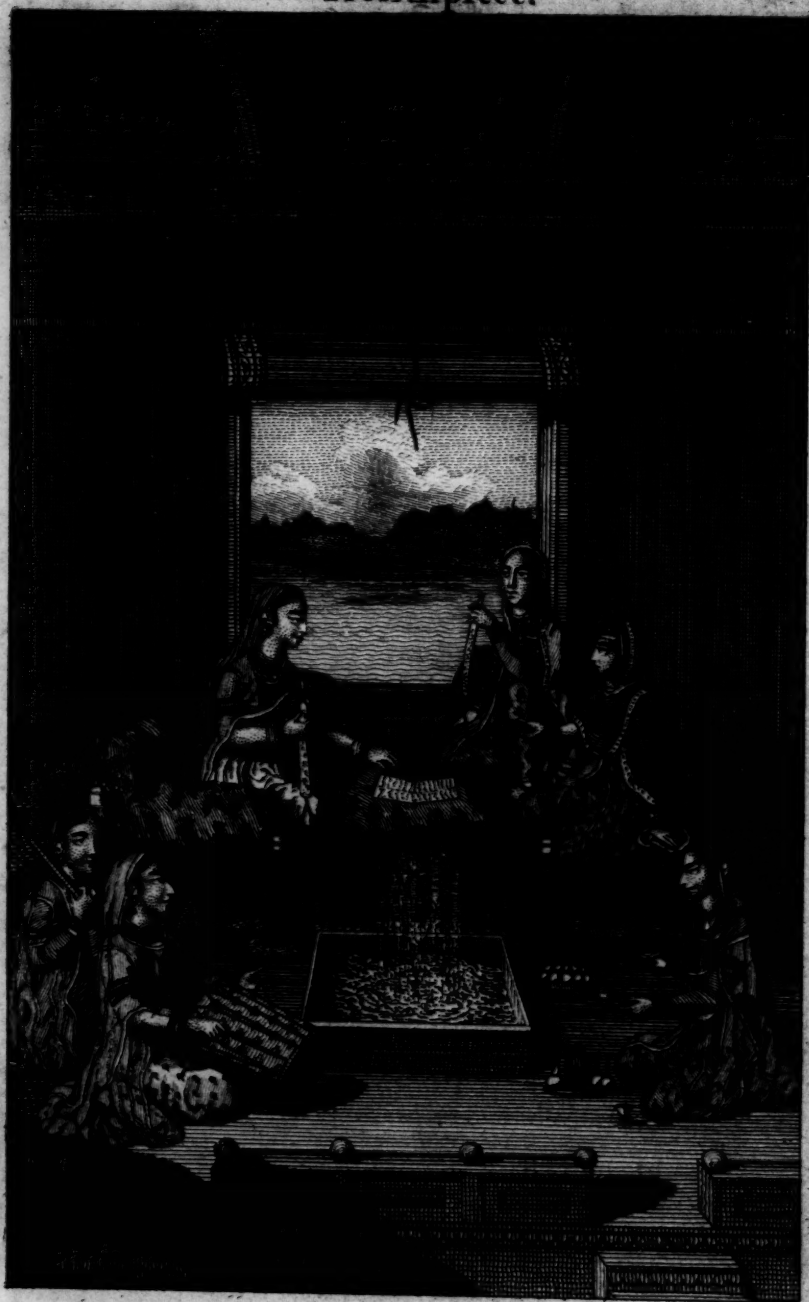
THE EAST INDIES.







Frontispiece.



An Apartment in a Taniannah.

304 d 9

L E T T E R S

FROM

THE ISLAND OF TENERIFFE,

B R A Z I L,

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,

A N D

THE EAST INDIES.

By Mrs. KINDERSLEY.

Widow of an Officer in his Majesty's Army

L O N D O N,

PRINTED FOR J. NOURSE, IN THE STRAND,
BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY.

MDCCLXXVII.

THE EAST INDIES

THE ISLAND OF

THE EAST INDIES

THE EAST INDIES

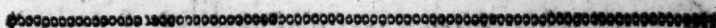
THE EAST INDIES





LETTERS

FROM THE
EAST INDIES, &c.



LETTER I.

Santa Cruz, Isle of Teneriffe, June 1764.

INOW begin to fulfill the promise I made, of giving you a particular account of whatsoever I should observe, worthy of notice, either in the course of my voyage, or during my residence in India.

We arrived here after three weeks sail from the Downs, the wind being uncommonly fair. Notwithstanding the short

B

time

2 LETTERS FROM THE

time we had been at sea, every individual on board seemed as much delighted at the sight of land, as if all his cares were at an end, and he should never again be distressed by sea-sickness, or the other inconveniences attendant on a voyage.

The land being in most parts very high, we had the pleasure of observing it at a great distance, appearing at first like clouds, and afterwards like a ridge of mountains, with the Peak, which is conical, and of an astonishing height, towering above the rest.

The Canary islands, of which there are seven, are all subject to the king of Spain; this is the largest except one, which is called Grand Canaria. A French ship driven amongst these islands by a storm, gave the first account of them in Europe, about the year 1330, and the reduction of them was attempted by some Spaniards in about 1337, but the people who landed were all taken prisoners by

by the natives. About thirty years after, the Spaniards made a descent on Lancerota, and by degrees made themselves masters of that island, and the five others; at last they took possession of Teneriffe, and brought all the inhabitants over to the Christian Faith.

It was not without much difficulty, and after various attempts, that the Spaniards took this island: the natives defended themselves with great bravery, at the same time that they treated the Spaniards with humanity; but at length the numbers of the Spaniards prevailed, and the natives submitted to their government, and became Christians.

The entire reduction of Teneriffe, which finished the conquest of the Canary islands, was effected in the year 1495; when the Spaniards built a fort at this port, which they called Santa Cruz, and the town is called by the same name. On the plains of Laguna they likewise built

4 LETTERS FROM THE

a city, and called it the city of Laguna,
or Saint de la Laguna.

Santa Cruz consists of two or three streets, which are broad, but remarkably ill-paved; the houses are all white on the outside; those belonging to the principal people are large, and the different apartments, which are all up stairs, are built round a court or square, with a gallery on all sides leading to the rooms, which are mostly spacious, but are calculated more for coolness than for shew: The windows are not glazed but latticed, which give the houses, both on the in and outside, a mean appearance. But the lattices have these two conveniencies, they admit the air, and give the ladies an opportunity of looking out without being seen.

The walls are white, and the doors, &c. without paint or ornament; which altogether convey to the mind of a person just come from England, an idea of rooms not quite finished.

The

The houses of the common people are very mean, with a look of much poverty. Even the churches are mean, and the priests though few, seemingly poor and humble.

The number of inhabitants on the island are computed to be 96000. The governor and officers are appointed by the king of Spain; the inhabitants are all Spanish subjects, and the Europeans call themselves Spaniards; some are really from Spain, others born here of Spanish parents; but a far greater number are descendants of Irish Roman Catholic families who about the end of the last century found it necessary to seek in this island that liberty and protection which their own country, at that period, did not afford them.

The original natives of this island were called Guanches. The account which the Spaniards give of them, is, that their ancestors found them almost in a

6 LETTERS FROM THE

state of nature, without laws or religion, and unable to give any account of their origin. It has been conjectured by some, that they were emigrants from Carthage. The Spaniards call them Moors, but what is their reason for giving them that appellation I know not. These Moors, the descendants of the Guanches, are mostly labourers and servants; they are much darker than the Spaniards, have lively black eyes, long black hair, and remarkable fine teeth.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER II.

Santa Cruz, June 1764.

ALTHOUGH Teneriffe is only three weeks sail from England, the whole appearance and manner of the people and things is so different, that it seems to us quite another world ; the religion, dress, address, houses, cookery, &c. are so very different. It is, in short, a poor Roman Catholic country, which are every where pretty much the same, making a proper allowance for the solemnity of the Spaniards, which differs from the softness of the Italians, and the forward complaisance of the French.

The Spaniards are less known to their neighbours than the people of any other great nation, because they do not travel much, and their own country is but little visited by strangers : The first cause (it must be confessed) is a proof that they have little desire of improvement, and

8 LETTERS FROM THE

the second, that their neighbours do not believe there is much to be learned from them.

However, wedded as they are to their ancient customs and superstitions, I am still of opinion, that, were they better known to us, we might find, that, in a balance of virtues and vices, they would stand as good a chance to preponderate in the right scale, as most of their neighbours.

There is one part of the national character, over which charity would wish to throw a veil; but alas! the persecutions in America will ever be remembered; although perhaps we are mistaken in the motive, and attribute that to avarice and a cruelty of temper which is occasioned by a blind superstition and religious enthusiasm. In all points, except religion and jealousy, no people can shew more mildness of manners, kind in the greatest degree to their domestics, whom they treat almost as their children.

The common people are not laborious, but that defect seems to be compensated for by their being contented with a little, their abstemiousness, the sobriety and regularity of their lives.

The pride which the Spaniards are accused of, although it is not without a dash of vanity, is mostly of that sort which makes people ashamed of unworthy actions; and they are remarkable for a high sense of honour, and a strict regard to their word.

But above all other virtues, they seem to lay a stress upon the duty and obedience of children to their parents, particularly their mothers; and they go so far as to say, that, if there could be a man amongst them undutiful in this point, he would be shunned as a monster.

LET-

LETTER III.

Santa Cruz, June 1764.

SINCE my last, I have made a little excursion, which was pleasing on account of its novelty, both as to the objects which presented themselves, and my manner of performing it; than which nothing can be more ridiculous. Fancy that you see me meekly riding upon an ass, which is the way all ladies are obliged to travel here, on account of commotions in the earth which have happened formerly, and have thrown up such prodigious heaps of large stones in some places, and sunk the ground so much in others, that it is impossible for a carriage to move, and extremely dangerous to venture on horseback; therefore the ladies all ride upon asses, and the men on mules: two cross sticks are fixed on the neck of the animal, and two behind, with a cushion laid between, by which means one sits almost as if in a carriage, and a man leads the ass.

Our

Our journey was to Laguna, usually called the city : which is a pretty large town, and regularly built, but quite unornamented, and silent as the night. Many of the principal people at Santa Cruz have houses there, which they go to by way of retirement from business. Laguna is about five miles from the sea, the road to it, if it can be called a road, is all the way up hill, in some parts steep, craggy, incumbered with pieces of loose rock, and of a most barren appearance ; notwithstanding which, one sees here and there a scattered vineyard, which thrives amongst the stones. As soon as we arrived at the city, we found ourselves in another climate ; instead of the heat, which at Santa Cruz is very great, it is there so cool that we walked in the sun at mid-day with pleasure, and the air was fresh and perfectly agreeable. Laguna stands on an eminence, and Santa Cruz in a valley ; but, after allowing for these circumstances, and the accidental difference of soil, &c. the change appears
to

12 LETTERS FROM THE

to me to be greater, than with all these allowances one could possibly suppose within the distance of five miles.

Our curiosity was soon satisfied, as Laguna does not contain any remarkable beauties, either of art or nature: the principal church is decorated with images of the Virgin, and a few paintings in a tawdry stile.—But what I had the greatest desire to see was a nunnery; a nunnery must surely be a charming place, at least to look at. Thither the young and beautiful retire, they renounce the pleasures, the cares, and the follies of the world! they spend their lives in piety, in praise of their Maker, in innocence! they exert their ingenuity in beautiful works of fancy; they repose themselves in the shady bowers of their delightful gardens.

For policy, knowing that they have relinquished every tender tie of duty, of friendship, and of love, has endeavoured, by the commodiousness of their retirement, to soften their sense of the confinement,

Im-

Impressed then as I was with this idea of spacious gardens, magnificent buildings, and beautiful virgins; how great was my disappointment! to find the buildings mean, dirty, and confined, the Nuns old and very plain. They talked to us through the grates with great civility, and presented us with some trifling flowers of their making.

We found one English woman among the nuns, who served as interpreter, though indeed not a very good one, for as she came here in her youth, and is now grown old without having occasion to speak her native language, she has partly forgot it.—She would not acknowledge, that any one after taking the veil ever repented of it; and, upon some of the English gentlemen seeming to doubt her, made use of this remarkable expression, No, no! they must not repent of it. In short, she expressed herself happy in her situation, with how much sincerity I shall not pretend to determine.

By

By her account, the life of a nun differs little from that of a girl at school; and the Abbess is a sort of Governess; they are obliged to conform punctually to the hours of rising, dining, prayer, &c. shut up with the same companions constantly, whether pleasing or disagreeable; with the addition of this most dreadful reflection, that death only can release them.

LET-

LETTER IV.

Santa Cruz, June 1764.

IT seems as if the Spaniards themselves began to be sensible of very bad consequences, from shutting young girls up from the world; for the court of Madrid has lately published a decree (which extends likewise to these islands) forbidding any woman to take the veil till the age of twenty-five; a considerable change, in a country where every innovation is regarded by the people as an attempt to overturn the ancient form of government; and the more to be wondered at, as such a change must, for obvious reasons, be very disagreeable to the Clergy.

The monasteries are as mean and miserable as the nunneries.—I believe no protestant ever saw a monastery, without reflecting as I do now, on the indolence and inutility of a monastic life, and the folly of its mortifications.

I should

I should suppose, that Monks will be as numerous amongst the Spaniards as amongst any people, since it favours both their pride and their indolence, two qualities which I believe no country in Europe will pretend to dispute with them.

After we had visited the nuns, we took a ride without the city, in order to have a better view of the famous Peak; here our eyes were suddenly delighted with the sight of a little verdant plain, a beauty in nature which is always delightful, but incomparably more so, when the eye has been fatigued with barrenness; the Peak is at the distance of near sixty miles, but from its amazing height one appears to be close under it; it is a dark brown rock, much the shape of a sugar-loaf, only that its height is greater in proportion to its breadth, so that its ascent is almost perpendicular; the Spaniards assert, that it is three miles in height, and that those who had been hardy
 enough

enough to climb to the top of it, have found it the labour of three days: It is not at present a Volcano, and the inhabitants seem to sleep in as perfect security; as if it never had thrown out any eruptions, although according to tradition, it is not more than seventy years since the country was despoiled by the vast quantities of sulphur and melted ore which issued from it; and no doubt, from the present barren, rocky, and desolate appearance of great part of the island, the commotions of the earth must likewise have been very terrible.

The coast supplies the inhabitants with fish in abundance, and notwithstanding the appearance of the country, provisions of all sorts are in sufficient plenty; likewise fruits such as are usual in hot climates, figs, plantains or bananas, lemons, almonds, grapes, &c.

A considerable quantity of wine, known by the name of the country, is made annually and exported; it is some-
C thing

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thing like Madeira, but not quite so good, although I believe it sometimes passes for it.

LETTER V.

Santa Cruz, June 1764.

THE excessive obedience of sons to their mothers, although it is an admirable quality amongst the Spaniards, is nevertheless, not without its inconveniencies, even to the women; for although it makes them of more consequence in old age, it makes them less happy and independent in youth and the prime of life.

Almost every family has a mother, aunt, or some sage matron, who is the oracle, and no woman is thought at years of discretion before she is grey headed: thus a young woman, when she marries, only passes from one tutelage to another;
from

from the direction of her own relations, to that of her husband's.

The excess of this national virtue, seems to account for the horror the Castilians and other Spaniards conceived at the Emperor Charles the Fifth; for although Johanah was absolutely in a state of lunacy, the Spaniards could not prevail on themselves to exclude her from the throne: And Charles's imprudence (and perhaps not knowing the disposition of the Spaniards) in suffering himself to be proclaimed King in the life-time of his mother, appeared to them so very impious, that nothing but his own good fortune could have obviated the difficulties it occasioned.

The ladies at Teneriffe lead the most retired lives imaginable, they very seldom leave their own houses, except going to church, and even there a young one does not venture without some elderly lady to attend her; no one ever goes out in the day-time without a veil; the veil is exact-

ly like two petticoats sewed together made of black serge, the one serves as an upper petticoat, and the other comes over the head, so that the woman is entirely covered by it, except a little over one eye, which is left open for her to guide herself by.

Notwithstanding the retiredness of their lives, the Senioras of Teneriffe are possessed of the most agreeable vivacity, which fully compensates for their want of beauty, and makes them exceedingly pleasing; their lively black eyes are expressive of their tempers; they have mostly long black hair, which they braid, and let it hang down their backs like a queue, without any head-dress; their complexions are very dark, and features not pleasing.—The dress is a jacket and petticoat with extreme stiff stays, and yet none of them are crooked; they have earrings, bracelets, and crosses; the jewels they esteem are emeralds and the oriental pearl.—They perfume themselves exceedingly high, and some of them paint.
Be-

Besides the law I mentioned relative to the Nuns, the king of Spain has issued out another order, which likewise concerns the women. It is that no one shall appear in Madrid after it is dark with a veil, the spirit of intrigue which the Spaniards have always been famous for has made this necessary. The ladies in this place, although not obliged, conform to it as a new fashion; therefore when they walk by moon-light, which is indeed the only time for walking, they wear a little cloak.

LETTER VI.

Bay of St. Salvador, Coast of Brazil, Aug. 1764.

IT is with the greatest pleasure in the world I now sit down to tell you, that after a long, dangerous, and uncomfortable voyage from Teneriffe, we are at

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last arrived safe in the bay of St. Salvador, otherwise Bahia, on the coast of Brazil, and hope soon to be on shore.

I am mortified at being obliged to stay till the captain's return, being already informed that I must not leave the ship till I have obtained leave from the Governor.

Several Portuguese gentlemen are come on board by the governor's order, two or three civilians, an officer of the army, a doctor, and a French surgeon: The two last to examine whether any contagious disorders are amongst the crew. The others to enquire the number of troops, the articles of trade, the captain's motive for making this port, &c. &c. all which they do in a manner which shews them to be distrustful and suspicious. They have either a very bad opinion of the English, or are not very honourable and sincere themselves.

In the mean while we have received from the shore, such fruit as the cold
5 climate .

climate of England never can produce, and it is doubly welcome to people who have seen none for a long time.

My impatience to be on shore is increased by the appearance of the town, which at this distance looks delightful. The part we see of it stands upon the side of a steep hill, with streets of white houses one above another, intermixed in some parts with small plantations of sugar canes, which, from the reflection of the sun, in these unclouded skies, have a very beautiful effect. Perhaps the having been deprived of the sight of land for some time, may add to its charms; but I really think I never saw a more beautiful landscape.

The reflection of heat from the land on all sides of the bay, together with the burning sun, make every part of the ship like an oven.

Until I have the pleasure to address you from the shore, I remain, &c.

LETTER VII.

St. Salvador, Aug. 1764.

I AM not a woman of much penetration, otherwise I should have known that things are not always what they seem; and I should have been less surprised, at finding that the nearer we came to St. Salvador, the less delightful it appeared; like many other things, which please only when viewed at a distance; as we rowed nearer the town, the houses which at the distance of a league looked so shining white, lost all their beauty; the dirt they are covered with became visible, the clumsy wooden windows, doors, and lattices, without the ornament of paint, grew more distinct, the want of elegance in the *tout ensemble* disgusted, and in short the delusion vanished.

I am

I am lodged at the house of the French surgeon I mentioned : he is married to a Portuguese native.

I much fear I shall not enjoy the respite from ship-board as I wish, on account of the very disagreeable confinement I am under, in this most suspicious, most unhospitable government.

Ever since I have been on shore, I have been followed and attended by an officer and a foldier, so much that I cannot walk out of one room into another, without being followed by them; the first night I came on shore, they slept in the passage adjoining to my room, but have since relaxed so much of their severity, as to go home at night, and return in the morning.

I have complained of this attendance, but without being able to obtain redress. I am told that it is a compliment, and to prevent my being affronted : But it does not require much penetration to discover
that

26 LETTERS FROM THE

that it is to prevent my going to the nunneries, of which they are exceedingly jealous, or becoming acquainted with any of their women; what danger they apprehend from it, is beyond my comprehension.

Fortunately I am in no danger either of corrupting my landlady, or of gaining any intelligence from her, for she speaks no language but her own, which I do not understand a word of.

But amongst these Portuguese, where I little expected such a satisfaction, I have the pleasure to meet with one English woman: Her father was a merchant at Lisbon, and a Roman Catholic: at Lisbon she married a Portuguese gentleman, who, with his family, is since come to settle here; the good lady was rejoiced to find one of her country women come to the place, and her husband waited on the Governor, to beg leave for me to reside at his house; but was answered, that two English women in one house was too much.

much. But what is still more extraordinary, I did not see her till two or three days after I came on shore, and the reason was, she waited the Governor's permission to make me a visit.

Good heavens! what a government is this to live under! these things astonish us, who are not satisfied even with liberty.

LETTER VIII.

St. Salvador, Aug. 1764.

MY desire of communicating to you my observations on whatever I see, has made me very attentive to the customs and government of this country, but indeed with very little success; for the inhospitable disposition of the Portuguese to strangers, gives one but little opportunity of making observations; and their suspicious tempers, do not leave one at free liberty to enquire.

The

The people are all called Portuguese, of whom some are descended from those who settled here when Portugal first took possession of this coast, and their numbers have since been constantly increasing by families from the mother country, who are allured by the hope of enriching themselves.

They come here with a different view to what English people have when they quit their native country for any foreign settlement: We always flatter ourselves with hopes of returning home again, but these generally settle themselves and families for generations, and look upon it as their future home.

If they are satisfied, it is well; if not, it is doubly hard, on account of the difficulty attending their return. No inhabitant being allowed to leave the place without an express order from Portugal; the obtaining of which is attended with such infinite trouble and length of time,

as

as make it amount almost to an impossibility.

Any foreigner who once takes up his residence here, finds it equally difficult to return: I believe they have very few foreigners but those they have seduced from ships which touch at the port. Several poor unhappy English fellows are here for the remainder of their wretched lives, which they languish out in poverty and contempt, and are watched with such particular caution whenever any foreign ship arrives here, as makes their escape impracticable.

You will easily conceive from this attention to keep every person from departing, that it is not a desirable country to live in.

The government is in itself a most extraordinary one: I know not whether to call it ecclesiastical, civil, or military: here are three who are said to have an equal share in the government, viz. a Bishop

Bishop, a Colonel, and a Civil Layman. As they keep foreigners so much at a distance, it is impossible to tell which is the head; all we know is, that whenever any application is made for necessities of provision or accommodation; if they are granted at all, it is with much delay and difficulty; under pretence that the Colonel cannot do it because the Governor is out of town, or the Governor cannot do it because the Colonel is absent, or both these together can do nothing without the Bishop.

Therefore if any stranger is plundered or cheated, as the Portuguese are the greatest thieves upon earth, no redress can be obtained, from the chicanery I have mentioned.

But by whatever name they may call the form of government, the church appears to carry all before it; the liberties the priests take, are abominably insolent and oppressive, they come into any house they please, dine and sup without invi-

invitation; dictate in conversation, and are admitted into the private apartments of the women, which does not seem to suit with the natural jealousy of the Portuguese, who in other respects appear to be very suspicious of their wives and daughters, seldom allowing them to be in company, or with their knowledge, to be seen by any other men, unless they are relations.

I am told, that this town alone does not contain less than three thousand religious, of different orders. No court of inquisition is kept here, but many inquisitors, who take cognizance of any misdemeanors, and confine and send to Portugal, any persons accused of spiritual crimes.

America has ever been the rendezvous of the Jesuits, and many are still in Brazil, notwithstanding the king has had resolution enough to banish them from Portugal,

The

The next in authority to the religious, are the military: a man trembles at the sight of a soldier in his house, and is obliged to treat every private man with as much respect and deference as if he was his master.

And yet, what is very extraordinary, these soldiers, who are so formidable to the inhabitants, are no more than a sort of militia, who in general follow different trades, both men and officers. But on the arrival of any foreign ship, an extraordinary number of them are put upon duty, and dressed in their uniforms, which is blue turned up with red. However little reason an enemy might have to fear these *men of war*, they are sufficiently feared by their fellow citizens.

So that between the subtle wiles of the priests, and the open violence of the military, the simple inhabitant must live in a wretched state of awe and dependance.

We

We have amused ourselves since we came here, in seeing the town, and visiting the churches : The town is large and populous, and the upper part of it is pleasant and airy, consisting of many good streets, broad and clean ; the houses are large, but very ill-finished, and of a mean appearance ; all that part of the town next the sea, the streets are narrow and dirty, full of mean looking shops, and crouded with negro slaves of both sexes.

The people of any fashion all live up stairs, and the ground floors are made use of as shops, warehouses, &c. The houses are not more elegant in the apartments than the outsides. The first floor generally consists of two or three large rooms, and always a small bed-room in the middle, so situated, as to receive no light but from the others, consequently quite dark when the doors are shut. Above these are the apartments of the children and slaves.

D

As

As to furniture, the once whited walls are generally adorned with prints of our Saviour and the Virgin in strong wooden frames, a couch, a few wooden chairs, and a crucifix finishes the apartment. And yet they have jewels, and gold, and silver, and many slaves; but the arts do not flourish amongst them, and taste and elegance in furniture and equipage is unknown: besides, where the greatest security is in poverty, every one fears to make an appearance, which might subject him to persecution.

The only buildings worthy observation are the churches, which are numerous, some of them large and superb, and by being unincumbered with pews, the double row of pillars have a very fine effect, and give the whole choir an open airy appearance which our churches can never have: they are kept in the neatest order, and adorned, particularly the altars, with carving, paintings, and gilding; with candlesticks and ornaments of gold and silver to a vast expence.

In

In one of the churches, I was shewn two superb images of our Saviour and the Virgin larger than life, they are kept in a separate apartment richly dressed, and have several priests to attend them, who were so civil as to open all their drawers, and shew me the rich embroidered cloaths, and fine jewels, with which these goodly images are decked upon solemn occasions.

The convents attached to the churches are likewise handsome buildings, with porticoes and cloisters, where the priests have their separate apartments, in which they enjoy all the luxuries of life. In short, these proud lazy pampered priests are a direct contrast to the poor, humble, mortified Monks of Teneriffe.

The priests certainly have some reason to value themselves, for all the little learning of the country is centered in them: This rich and populous place does not afford one academy of any kind;

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reading and writing is the usual education of the youth, if to this is added a little Portuguese Latin, the boy is fit for a Bishop.

It is surprising, that in a country so nearly connected with a kingdom in Europe, as this is with Portugal, the arts and sciences should be so utterly unknown. The paintings, &c. which they have in the churches, are from Europe: The inhabitants seem to have very little idea of the elegancies of life; they spend their time in great indolence, and knowledge is shut out from them, by their being allowed to read very few books which can give them information.

It is the policy of the government to keep the people in ignorance, which makes them more docile under an arbitrary sway.

Knowledge of the laws and customs of different countries, the blessing of a moderate government, and indeed learning
in

in general, is apt to inspire people with a confidence in thinking, which makes them sensible of every oppression they labour under.

They compare their own laws, and the impartiality with which they are put in execution, with those of other countries; and sometimes, if they are under a happy government, are sensible of the blessing; but if not, are always sure to be sensible of its defects.

Corruption in the state, is naturally followed by corruption in the minds of the people: the more they are actuated by the principle of fear, the less they have of honour; and the more difficulty they find in obtaining justice, the greater will be their craft and dishonesty; until every man looks upon his neighbour with an eye of suspicion and distrust.

It is amusing, and at the same time melancholy, to reflect on the extraordinary rise and fall of particular nations;

Portugal, whose commerce and navigation once extended itself over both Indies; and who set the example to all Europe, to explore the riches, and form settlements in the East, is now so sunk, that one can scarcely believe the present race to be descendants of those who lived some ages since.—All history does not furnish a more remarkable instance of national virtue and resolution, than the manner of the Portuguese throwing off the Spanish yoke.

When one considers the great number of people of all ranks intrusted with the Duke of Braganza's intention, and the long time they had to keep it secret; let a change have been ever so necessary for the public good, or the burthen to individuals ever so grievous, it is nevertheless extraordinary, that either fear of punishment, or hope of reward, should not induce some of them to betray the secret.

LETTER IX.

Saint Salvador, August 1764.

ALTHOUGH I am not permitted to visit the nunneries, Mrs. R. has been so kind as to carry me to a private Convent, where I saw several young women dressed like Nuns. One amongst them I could not help particularly observing; she was the picture of sorrow. I naturally enquired what was the cause, and heard a story, which shews the dreadful power of the inquisition, and how little property, or even life, is secure, in a country where such a tribunal, or any of its ministers are permitted.

Her father, said she, was a worthy good man; but he was very rich, and it happened to be known that he was so: The inquisitors, without letting him or his friends know what was his crime, pretended that he had been accused of heresy; they seized him, took possession

40 LETTERS FROM THE

of his house, &c.; and his family, not knowing whether he is sent to Portugal, whether he is confined here, or certainly whether he is dead or alive, are ever since in a state of anxiety between hope and fear.

We are shocked with the frequent accounts we hear of murders. If a Portuguese has received any injury or affront, he cannot as in England have recourse to the laws to do him justice; the church interferes in every thing, and the thunder of the inquisition perverts the natural course of justice, but revenge! bloody revenge! soon or late, is sure to follow.

The offended person watches his adversary, till some time or other he finds him alone, unarmed, and in the dark; then, either with his own hand, or by the hand of an assassin, which a little money will procure, he stabs him in the back, and then takes sanctuary at the altar of some church; where confession and alms procure his pardon: there he

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is

is as secure from being brought to punishment, as if he was not in the country. If his friends can procure his pardon, he in a short time appears in the world again as before; if not, he turns priest, and is received into the body of the church as a true penitent.

LETTER X.

St. Salvador, Aug. 1764.

AFTER what I have said of the general character of the men of this place, you will not expect to hear much in praise of the women; brought up in indolence, and their minds uncultivated, their natural quickness shews itself in cunning. As their male relations do not place any confidence in their virtue, they in return use their utmost art to elude the vigilance with which they are observed; and, to speak the most favourably, a spirit of intrigue reigns amongst them. Were I to tell you what the darkness

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ness of the evening conceals, amongst such as are not to be seen in the day but in a church, it would look like a libel on the sex.

Many of them, when they are quite young, have delicate features and persons, but there is a certain yellow tint in their complexions which is disagreeable, and beside they look old very early in life.

The dress is calculated for a hot climate; the best-dressed woman I have seen, had on a chintz petticoat, a flowered muslin shift, with deep ruffles, and a tucker of the same sewed upon it, without any stays or gown, but a large sash of crimson velvet, thrown round and round her waist. Her hair was braided behind, and fastened up with a great many combs; she had drops in her ears, and her hair was ornamented with a sort of egret, or rather a large lump of massive gold, embossed and set with diamonds; on her neck were several rows of small gold chain; and on her arms she had bracelets

of gold of great thickness, and each of them wide enough for two. A pair of slippers like the fash, completed the dress.

LETTER XI.

St. Salvador. Sept. 1764.

SINCE the conclusion of my last, we obtained leave to go a few miles into the country, for we dared not go without, and then not without our attendants.

We were much delighted with our little excursion, which afforded us a view of a rich, fruitful, and beautiful, though almost uncultivated, country. After going for some time through cool shady lanes, which terminated in an open airy plain, we had a most pleasing view of the sea. Little rural cottages are scattered about the country, and gardens with variety of fruits, plantains, melons, tamarinds,

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rinds, limes, citrons, lemons, sweet lemons, pomgranates, water melons, and lofty trees bending under the weight of oranges, a fruit which are here in the greatest plenty and perfection: a particular species of them are four times as large as those you have from Spain and Portugal, have no seeds, and are of a delicious flavour.

The husbandman's labour is little required, in a soil and climate like this, where the richest fruits of the earth grow almost spontaneously.

How much did we enjoy the freshness of the evening air! which in this hot town we are deprived of in the day time, and the delightful shade of the wide spreading trees, a pleasure which can be known in its full extent only in these climates, where the sultry heat of the sun is intolerable! The clearness and brightness of the sky add indeed to the beauty of a prospect, and throw a double gloom upon the shade. But in your cold frozen clime, the glorious sun is always
welcome,

welcome, seldom too powerful, and too often absent.

Further distant in the country, chiefly along the sea coast, are large plantations of sugar and tobacco, which belong to the Portuguese, who reside at St. Salvador; each of them employs a great number of slaves.

But it is not the tobacco, or the sugar, or the fertility of the earth, which have brought christian adventurers here; but the riches which the bowels of the earth contain, and which these Indians value not. The diamond mines all belong to the king, and are a great source of his riches; although the diamonds are esteemed not quite so fine as those of Golconda, having something of a yellow cast: here are likewise some amethysts, and a great number of topazes, which are to be bought exceedingly cheap.

I don't know whether it is, that the soil or climate is not proper for corn, or whether

whether the inhabitants are too indolent to cultivate it; but it is certain, that the Portuguese do not grow near enough to supply their own tables; but eat *Cassada* pulverized, they call it *farinna de Pao*, which is literally powder of post, and a most proper name; for it has no kind of taste, but feels in the mouth like chaff; it is not made into bread, but stands upon the table in a dish.

As it is not customary to trust foreigners with horses, we were obliged to go our little excursion in chairs, and these being as extraordinary as any thing I have seen in the country, I shall endeavour to describe them. They are of an oblong make, one pole is fixed before and one behind, the top and bottom are fastened together by the pieces of wood to which the poles are fixed, and no other wood-work round it, but curtains from top to bottom made of camblet and lined with bays, calculated, one would suppose, rather for the frigid than the torrid zone; at the back part is a little seat about the breadth

breadth of two hands; I suppose those who are used to them, can sit very well; but between the narrowness of the seat, and the motion of the chair, a stranger is in danger of being thrown out at every step. The chair is carried by two negro slaves on their shoulders; at every step the foremost gives a groan, which the other answers: this helps to make them keep an equal pace; but it is a melancholy disagreeable noise, and when we first came on shore, hearing the slaves, who were in parties, carrying any thing from one place to another, utter these kind of moans, we thought they were oppressed with burthens beyond their strength; which excited in us much pity for the slaves, and accordingly great contempt for their masters.

I must not omit giving you an account of a wonderful creature, which the Portuguese are constantly talking of, and insist upon my believing: Their account is as follows; that a creature of the serpent kind, which is found in low marshy ground,

ground, chiefly along the borders of rivers, is so large that it will swallow a bullock whole; the method is this, it begins at the tail of the beast, and licks it all over with its tongue, the strength of which, and the uncommon quality of the saliva, is such, that it breaks every bone, and makes the whole carcase soft and glutinous, by which means the serpent sucks down a creature much larger than itself. They add likewise that a great many human lives are lost by these serpents, for whenever any man is so unfortunate as to be within sight of one of them, it is impossible for him to make his escape: I have no great faith in these my informers, but I must observe, that Don Ulloa, whom I esteem a good authority, mentions in his voyage, creatures which answer to this description.

LET-

LETTER XII.

St. Salvador, Sept. 1764.

I Fear that whatever I have yet said of the Portuguese on this coast, shews them to have more vices than virtues; therefore I am happy before I leave them, to observe to their honour, that in the midst of all their vices, they have shewed great humanity, as well as policy, in their treatment of the original natives in this country, whom they have left a free though conquered people; they are not either servants or slaves, but are mostly retired to the interior parts of the country, where they are governed by their own laws, and exercise their own religion—The Portuguese, in this, have not followed the cruel example of their neighbors the Spaniards; whose religious zeal has carried them to the height of barbarity: the methods they have taken to make the

E.

Americans

Americans in that part of the country they have conquered, embrace the christian religion, is a disgrace not only to christianity, but to human nature.—The Portuguese have missionaries dispersed throughout the country : and it is not, they say, very unusual for the natives to become Christians ; but when they do, it is not by compulsion.

All the servants both men and women are slaves, brought from Africa, of the negro kind ; by nature disagreeable, but often rendered still more so, by frightful marks on their faces, made by their parents when they are young ; they are all made christians as soon as bought, and it is amazing to see the effect the pageantry of the Roman Catholic religion has upon their uninformed minds ; they are as devout as the common people in our cities are prophane ; constant at their worship, obedient to their preceptors without scruple, and inspired with all the enthusiasm of devotion ; the gilded pomp, the solemnity of processions, the mysterious
rites,

rites, the fear as well as admiration of their ghostly fathers, all conspire to render them so.

From the warm and steady devotion of the common people here, it has often occurred to me, that the plain good sense of the protestant worship, so well calculated for those who can distinguish the substance from the shadow, is much wanting in that glare and shew, which catches the eye, and leads the imagination of the vulgar. Confession itself, was it not abused, is an excellent institution; and were the Roman Catholic priests to take as much care of the morals of their flock, as they do to attach them to the church, they would be the most virtuous common people in the world.

It must seem strange, that whatever subject I begin a letter upon, it generally slides into religion before I finish it: but it cannot be otherwise, where the forms of religion encompass every thing, where one half of the people are governed by

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superstition, and the other half make use
of it to govern with.

May you enjoy long life, in that
country, where men profess less zeal,
and practise more virtue.

Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

Cape of Good Hope, Nov. 1764.

I Have now the pleasure to address you
from a place which travellers have
spoken of in the highest terms, and in-
deed not without some reason.

For, besides the great conveniencies,
refreshments, and good accommodations
to be met with here, I think every one
must be pleased with the town, which
has

has all the regularity and neatness usual amongst the Dutch: the streets are all parallel to each other; and there is one large square with trees planted round, and a canal of water from springs running down: the houses are very good, and have a neat appearance on the outside; which altogether make it a very pretty town, and, some few circumstances excepted, equal in neatness and conveniences to any of our sea-ports in England. The governor's garden, as it is called, is a very large garden belonging to the Dutch East India Company, where strangers, and sometimes the inhabitants, walk by way of mall: the method this is laid out in appears something extraordinary. In the middle, is one very long broad walk, planted on each side with oaks, which stand very close, and the boughs spread in such a manner as to have exactly the appearance of espaliers, which, although tall for such ornament, are short for oaks; the rest of the garden is divided into squares, and planted on each side the walks in the same manner; within the

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squares is a vast variety of plants of all countries and climates, to which the oaks are an excellent defence from the high winds, as well as a great shelter to people walking.

At the end of the grand walk are iron rails, which give view into an inclosure, in which one sees several extraordinary beasts and birds; the governor has a very curious collection, and most of them natives of the country; amongst the beasts, are the zebra, or wild ass, elks, tigers, leopards, wolves, &c.

In one part of the garden, a little detached, is a pretty good house, called the garden house: this is always kept ready to accommodate any of their governors passing to and from India: English governors, admirals, commanders in chief, &c. are complimented with living in it while they stay.

The Dutch, who value themselves much upon being good gardeners, shew that sort of pride no where more than in
this

this country; which being so situated between the extremes of heat and cold, is particularly favourable to vegetation: and produces almost all the fruits, vegetables, and plants, common to both Europe and Asia. The inhabitants themselves say, that there is not a fruit in the world but what grows here; however they are a good deal mistaken, and in this particular, I think travellers who have mentioned the Cape, have said rather too much: Indeed, it is no wonder that any person coming from sea, particularly after having been long in India, and finding the tables covered with such plenty and variety of agreeable fruits, to which they were accustomed in both climates, should be very ready to subscribe to the opinion of this being the most fruitful country in the world. They in general do not stay till the novelty is worn off, or do not consider the subject. If they did, I think they would not attribute the plenty so much to the soil or climate, as to the steady industry of the Dutch: a well-known proof that they are the cause of

it, is, that when this Cape was in possession of the English, they quitted it, because, on account of the barrenness of the country, it was not worth the expence of keeping.

But let me observe by way of excuse for my countrymen, that notwithstanding the present plenty, and although smiling vineyards, gardens, and plantations are scattered over many parts of the land, nothing can appear more bleak and barren, than those parts of the country which still remain uncultivated.

In many, English oaks are planted in great abundance, which although tall, never grow to be large; as to European fruits, such as apricots, peaches, strawberries, &c. although they are exceedingly plentiful, and very pleasant, they are never so perfect as in England; and oranges, and some other fruits peculiar to warm climates, are very poor.

All

All which I should account for thus; that although, between the industry of the inhabitants, and the uncommon fineness of the climate, an amazing variety of trees, plants, fruits, and vegetables, are produced, the soil itself is too poor to bring some of them to perfection.

The finest fruit is the grape, which is extremely large and well flavoured: the vines grow as in most other wine countries in fields like corn, without any support; but on account of the high winds, the vineyards are defended with oaks in the manner I have described in the gardens.

The vintage is in autumn, which is about March and April, when a considerable quantity of wine is made; the white they call Cape Madeira, the best red is a sort of Tent.

The town stands under the shelter of three steep lofty hills, which extend a considerable way into the country: these
hills

hills from their shape, are called the Table-land, the Sugar-loaf, and the Lion's-rump, the first of which before a gale of wind, is always covered with a thick cloud, which the people call the devil's table-cloth; it is an infallible sign, that within twelve hours at most, the wind will blow strong off the land, the wind lasts perhaps for two or three days, when it ceases for a day or two, and then, after the same sign, begins to blow again: it is almost a continual high wind; not however so turbulent, but that that ships ride very safe at anchor nine months in the year in the Bay; which is formed by a little island opposite, called Penguin island.

In the winter months, which are June, July, and August, any ship which arrives is obliged to put into another bay about eight miles to the eastward of the cape, and called *Cape Falso*, or False Bay.

The

The Dutch are of opinion that the high winds are a great blessing; for say they, the climate is hot, and we stand so very low, that a common breeze could not reach us, and the place would be very unhealthy. As it is, they enjoy a competent share of health, having but few sickly people amongst them; and yet what is very extraordinary, their lives in general do not exceed fifty years, and vast numbers die between forty and fifty, so that a very old man or woman is really a wonder.

The small pox when it happens amongst them, which is perhaps once in ten, or seven years, is a most dreadful calamity; the devastation it makes exceeds belief; whole families, parents, children, and slaves are sometimes carried off by it: it spreads itself all over the country; and people shut themselves up from their neighbours, to escape the pestilence.

The

The Dutch aver that the climate is particularly unfavorable to the small pox: but I cannot attribute the mortality so much to that cause, as to two others; first, their utter ignorance in managing the disorder; and secondly, the improper state of body they are always in to receive it; being mostly fat gross people, occasioned partly by their diet (for they dress their victuals with a vast quantity of grease and butter, and the children live in the same manner) and partly by their want of exercise, which they use very little of; for altho' the Dutch are naturally oeconomists and careful, they are not in this country active, but the labor is left entirely to the slaves.

The interior parts of this country, which by all accounts are fine, are seldom visited by travellers: but the Dutch have farms to the distance of many hundred miles. The people who live at them travel every year to the Cape with

the produce of their farms, corn, butter, fruits, &c. &c.; they travel in covered waggons with eight horses, and are three or four weeks upon the road. Notwithstanding these people are unprotected, and every family very distant from any of their own country, they live in peace and safety; without any interruption from the Hottentots.

At the distance of two or three hundred miles up the country are natural hot baths, which the Dutch hold in high esteem for the cure of almost all disorders; but it seems they have ever been fatal to the English who have tried them. Nothing but real necessity, I think, can induce any person to undertake a journey of so much difficulty and fatigue; the only method of getting there is in covered waggons, with very few conveniences on the road, partly through a wild country which is infested by tigers, leopards, &c. &c. and some danger from slaves escaped from their masters, who have

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have taken shelter in these wilds, and are rendered desperate by their unhappy situation.

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER XIV.

Cape of Good Hope, Dec. 1764.

THE Cape is an absolute contrast to the last we came from; and having been there, makes us more sensible of the liberty of doing whatever we please, and going wherever we have a mind. The Dutch police is admirable! œconomy, regularity, and decency, are the effects of it.

The chief officers are the governor, deputy, or (as they call it) second governor, and the fiscall; a very small number of soldiers, commanded by an officer who has the rank of lieutenant-colonel: the governor has been here abundantly

abundance of years, and has raised by slow degrees from a private foldier to his present rank; most of the inhabitants were born here, and here most of them will be buried: not having, in general, either inclination or abilities to go to Europe: they are most of them connected, and doubly connected here, by marriages and intermarriages; they have houses and land, their gains are not sufficient to enable them to return to the mother-country with fortunes; but certain, and sufficient to enable them to live with comfort here, where they are blessed with a moderate government, and a delightful climate.

I never was in a place where people seemed to enjoy so much comfort; few are very rich, none miserably poor; great riches would be useless, as they have no means of spending; those who have just the necessaries of life are therewith content, because they never expected more; their ideas and their wants are few, and there is that happy constitutional

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tional dulness in the Dutch, which keeps them perfectly satisfied without either business or pleasures to occupy their minds.

The women are rather more active: delicacy is not the characteristic of the Dutch females, but they are decent, plump, healthy, and chearful.

Constantia, a place visited by all strangers, is a neat Dutch farm, about eight miles from the Cape, remarkable for making very rich wines both red and white, which are much esteemed every where, both on account of the richness and scarcity: The grapes, it seems, of this vine-yard, owing to something particular in the soil, are superior to any other in the country.

LET-

LETTER XV.

Cape of Good Hope, Feb. 1765.

Nothing can be more agreeable to the people of this place, than the arrival of an English ship, as it causes a circulation of money, and indeed it is chiefly by the English that most people in the town are supported; not only by taking the Captains, Passengers, &c. to board at their houses, but by furnishing the ships with provision. A great many French ships likewise stop here, and all the Dutch passing to and from India; but for the last they are obliged to provide according to certain prices, stipulated by the Dutch company, and as neither the Dutch or French spend their money so freely as the English, of course they are not so desirable guests.

The custom is to pay a rix-dollar daily for each person's board and lodging, for which they are provided with every thing,

F

the

66 LETTERS FROM THE

the tables are plentiful, the houses are clean, and the people obliging, and what makes it extremely comfortable, is, that most of them speak English; French is likewise spoken by many; so that foreigners find themselves more at home in this port than can be imagined.

LETTER XVI.

Cape of Good Hope, Feb. 1765.

THE servants of the Dutch, except a very few Hottentots, are all slaves, brought originally from different parts of the East Indies. What seems extraordinary is, that they do not learn to talk Dutch, but the Dutch people learn their dialect, which is called Portuguese; and is a corruption of that language, some of them are called Malays or Malaynese, brought from the country of Malacca, and the islands to the eastward of India, subject to the Dutch company.

pany. These slaves differ from the others in the flatness of their faces, the length of their eyes, and the distance of the eyes from each other; they are likewise less black, but more of a pale yellow. This cast of people are remarkable for the violence of their passions, and are to the utmost degree revengeful; a melancholy instance of their violence has happened lately. One of them being offended with his master, gave himself up to the fury of his passion, and as the term is, *run a muck*, a thing which is not unusual. The first step he took was to intoxicate himself with opium, then letting his long hair loose about him, he sallied out with a knife in his hand, running strait forward, to stab every man, woman, child, or animal which he met with. Fortunately, only one person was killed before he was taken; but the execution which followed, was the most cruel that could be invented by the art of man: a lingering death upon the rack, with the application of burning instruments in a manner too shocking to repeat.

LETTER XVII.

Cape of Good Hope, March 1765.

I Have purposely deferred giving you any account of the natives of this country, the Hottentots, till I could be assured that the strange accounts I heard of them were true; my eyes have convinced me, that some of them are, and others I have from good authority.

They are by nature tolerably white, and not unhandsome, but as soon as a child is born, they rub it all over with oil, and lay it in the sun; this they repeat till it becomes brown: and always break the infant's nose, so that it lays close to its face; as they grow up, they continue constantly to rub themselves with oil or grease, and by degrees become almost a jet black; this it seems they do to strengthen themselves.

Their

Their dress is the skins of beasts quite undressed, one they tie over their shoulders, and another round their waste by way of apron; their wrists, ankles, and wastes, are ornamented with glass-beads, bits of tobacco pipes, pieces of brass, and such kind of trumpery, and sometimes even the dried entrails of beasts.

Their only riches is in cattle, and their employment feeding them; except the hunting of wild beasts, at which they are exceedingly expert; the skins they constantly bring to the town, and barter with the Dutch for trumpery beads, &c. &c. or spirituous liquors, of which they are excessively fond.

Drukenness and gluttony are the vices to which they are most addicted; having no moderation in either eating or drinking, but whenever it is in their power, indulge themselves in either to the greatest excess, devouring as much at a meal, as

would be sufficient for days, seldom leaving off while there is any thing left to eat or drink : they then lay down in their hovels till pinched again by hunger.

They have no superiority amongst them but the chiefs which are chosen when they make war, which one nation of Hottentots often does against another, though never against the Dutch ; but these chiefs have no distinction in their manner of living, for they have not the least idea of the grandeur, or what all other people esteem the necessaries, of life.

It is a doubtful point whether they have any notion of a deity, as nothing like a religious ceremony is ever observed amongst them : but most of the Dutch are of opinion that they worship the sun ; a very natural conjecture, for although they appear hardly a degree above the brute creation, still one must allow they have the faculty of thinking, consequently must attribute the earth, the sky, and all about them, to some superior power.

The sun is the most glorious object we behold, and the most likely to inspire awe and reverence into those who are not informed, that it is only one, of the many wonderful works of the Almighty.

They have no books or letters of any kind, their language consisting chiefly in signs, nodding the head, and an undistinct rattling in the throat.

The custom in regard to their old people is truly shocking: whenever they come to such an age as to be unable to support themselves, their relations convey them to some distance, and let them starve to death. In all other respects they are the most quiet inoffensive people in the world.

They sometimes become servants to the Dutch, and behave perfectly well; their honesty may be depended upon for any thing but liquor, but they have all, both men and women, such a strong natural propensity to intoxication, that it is

never to be conquered: those who are servants alter their appearance, and dress like slaves, but sometimes return among their own people, and to their own manners.

LETTER XVIII.

Pondicherry, June 1765.

THE ship we came in stopped at Nagapatam, a Dutch settlement on the coast of Coromandel; this first specimen I had of India rather surprised than pleased me; I could not be reconciled to the vast numbers of black people who flocked to the shore on my first arrival; although I must acknowledge, that they were so far from being terrible in their appearance, that at first sight I believed them all to be women, from the effeminacy both of their persons and dress, the long white jammers and turbands

bands appear so truly feminine to strangers. But the almost stark-nakedness of the lowest class is still more disgusting.

On our arrival, we found the place in the greatest confusion, on account of the elopement of the Governor, who had just made his escape on board an English vessel, in which he went to Madras, and put himself under the protection of the English Governor there: he was scarcely missed, when another Governor arrived from Batavia, with full powers to send his predecessor there under guard. On finding he had left the place, the Dutch had the barbarity to treat his lady in the most unkind manner, seized the furniture of her house, and put herself and children in prison under strict confinement.

Various were the opinions relative to the merit or demerit of the late Governor, but I shall not trouble you with such uninteresting particulars, further than to observe, that from this conversation I have learned

learned, that his fate is not an uncommon one : and likewise, that the policy of the Dutch company is as follows: whenever a Governor has acquired a great fortune, they call him to account for the manner in which it has been raised ; and it has always been in their power to find some heavy charge against their Governors which merited punishment ; but the rigidity of justice has always been softened, by a forfeiture of half, or two thirds of the fortune. Judge then, how much these lovers of justice must be mortified ! that a delinquent should escape their hands unpunished.

The Dutch governments in India are not as the English, independent of each other ; but subject to the General of Batavia, to whom they are accountable ; he is perhaps the greatest and most powerful subject in the world.

I am now writing from Pondicherry : the ruinous state of this once fine place, fills my mind with a sort of pleasing melancholy ;

choly; one feels a kind of reverence and pity for ruined grandeur, even in things inanimate: a small part of the palace remains standing, but not more than two houses in the whole town, and those, as well as the noble fortifications, in a shattered condition.

I cannot help figuring to myself the situation of its inhabitants during the siege, their property destroyed, their houses laid waste, widows bewailing the loss of their husbands, and mothers of their children!

But they had this consolation, that when conquered, they fell into the hands of a merciful enemy; the English, ever merciful as brave, never shewed it more than on this occasion. . Private property was as much as possible secured, the French families were received at Madras, and treated with the greatest kindness.

They

They enjoyed likewise another privilege, which they received from heaven; I mean the constitutional *gayeté de cœur* peculiar to the French nation, by which they soon forgot their losses and their griefs, and the sound of a fiddle as usual summoned them to the sprightly dance.

LETTER XIX.

Madrafs, or Fort St. George, June 1765.

YOU will congratulate me on being at last arrived in India, and in an English settlement; but it is only for a few days, I shall then return again to the stormy ocean: in the mean while I could not omit giving you some little, though imperfect account it must be, of this town; which it would be unpardonable to pass over without saying something in praise of, as it is without exception the prettiest place

place I ever saw. Madrafs is built entirely by the English; it is strongly fortified; and the walls and works, as well as the barracks for the army, the store-houses, and every other public building, are so calculated as to be both convenient, and an addition to the beauty of the place.

The town is laid out in streets and squares; the houses neat and pretty, many of them large; in all the good houses the apartments are up stairs, and all on one floor; the rooms are large and very lofty; most of the houses are built with a *varendar*, which is a terrace on a level with the rooms in the front, and sometimes in the back part of the house, supported by pillars below, and a roof above supported likewise by pillars, with rails round to lean on. The *varendars* give a handsome appearance to the houses on the out-side, and are of great use, keeping out the sun by day, and in the evenings are cool and pleasant to sit in. But what gives the greatest elegance to the houses is a material peculiar to the place; it

it is a cement or plaster call'd *cbannam*, made of the shells of a very large species of oysters found on this coast; these shells when burnt, pounded, and mixed with water, form the strongest cement imaginable: if it is to be used as plaster, they mix it with whites of eggs, milk, and some other ingredients; when dry, it is as hard, and very near as beautiful, as marble; the rooms, stair-cases, &c. are covered with it.

A short distance from the town is a small elegant house and garden, where the Nabób of Arcót sometimes resides; the heat of the climate admits of an open airy stile of building, which is pleasing to the eye; a roof supported with pillars is more elegant than a wall with windows and doors; besides, the rooms being unincumbered with chimnies, makes it more easy to lay them out in uniformity: the cook rooms are always at some distance, and they have no servants apartments.

A little

A little without the walls of Madras is the black town, where are shops of all sorts, and where all the menial servants belonging to the English reside; for they are such strict observers of their religion, the tenets of which I shall hereafter be better able to inform you of, that they will neither eat nor drink, and are even unwilling to sleep, in their masters houses: and if it happens that they are obliged to remain the whole twenty-four hours, or more, without going home, they fast rather than eat or drink with any but those of their own *cast*.

The English boast much of a delightful mount about ten miles distant, where the Governor and others have garden houses, which they say are both cool and elegant. But let not what I have said lead you to suppose, that any thing here is equal to the noble edifices in England; I only mean, that there is a neatness, and a uniform simplicity throughout the whole of this town, which cannot fail of being universally pleasing.

The

The mode of living, from the religion of their servants, the heat of the climate, and other circumstances, is so extraordinary, that I can scarcely believe myself amongst English people: I am not at present qualified to give you a particular account of it: therefore, I shall only say that they are expensive in horses, carriages, palengneens, and numbers of servants; are fond of entertainments, dress, and pleasure; sociable with each other, hospitable and civil to strangers.

The heat here is excessive, but the climate for India is esteemed healthy, and people frequently come here for the recovery of their health from Bengal; for the soil is dry, and the benefit of the sea breeze, which constantly blows from between twelve and one at noon till the same time at night, is a great advantage: as soon as the wind comes from the sea the whole air is changed, and though hot, less so than before. The other twelve hours it blows off the land.

The

The night air is so dry, that people frequently sleep without any cover, on the tops of their houses, which are flat roofed, and find no inconvenience from it.

I am detained here by the tremendous surf, which for these two days has been mountains high: and it is extraordinary, that on this coast, even with very little wind, the surf is often so high that no boat dares venture through it: indeed it is always high enough to be frightful.

Till I have the pleasure to address you from Bengal,

I am, &c. &c.

G

LET

LETTER XX.

Calcutta, August 1765.

AT length I have the satisfaction to inform you of our arrival at Calcutta. The voyage from Madras, short as it is, is a dangerous one; for the entrance to the mouth of the Ganges is a very difficult piece of navigation, on account of the many islands, cut out by the numberless branches of the river; many of which branches are really great rivers themselves, and after sweeping through and fertilizing the different parts of several provinces, there disembogue themselves, with great force, and the roaring noise of many waters.

Besides there are a number of sand banks, which, from the prodigious force of the waters, change their situation. Therefore it is necessary to have a pilot well skilled in the different channels; but

but as such are not always to be had, many ships are thereby endangered, and sometimes lost.

LETTER XXI.

Calcutta, April 1766.

LAST night, or rather early this morning, we had for the first time since my arrival, what is called a *Northwester*, which are very frequent in the hot season; a *Northwester* is a violent storm of wind from that quarter, attended with thunder, lightning, and rain: the loudness of the thunder, the terrible flashes of lightning, the roaring of the wind, which carries all before it, and the deluge of rain, are altogether tremendous: it appeared as if every crack of thunder must tear the roof of the house I was in from end to end.

The tempest being spent, was succeeded by the azure morn, and the radiant sun; which, tempered by the coolness of the earth, formed some hours of the most delightful climate that can be imagined, but was too soon followed by excessive heat, for after every Northwester the heat sensibly increases till the rains commence. Every one now begins to look forward to that season, wishing it was come.

The baneful influence of the sun is a melancholy reflection; the number of sudden deaths amongst the English, and the caution they are obliged to use to preserve life, makes this season very uncomfortable; and when it happens, as it sometimes does, that the rains are late before they set in, the mortality exceeds belief.

The illness of which most people die, is what is called here, a *Pucker* fever, which

which frequently carries a person off in a few hours; the physicians esteem it the highest degree of putridity. But some have more lingering illness, such as bile in the stomach, which indeed is a disorder very few are entirely exempt from in these cases: the intense heat relaxes the coats of the stomach so as to prevent digestion, which occasions much illness, and oft-times death.

It is frequently said, though very unjustly, that this climate never kills the English ladies; and, indeed, it must be allowed, that women do not so often die of violent fevers as men, which is no wonder, as we live more temperately, and expose ourselves less in the heat of the day; and perhaps, the tenderness of our constitutions sometimes prevents the violence of the disorder, and occasions a lingering, instead of a sudden, death. But most English women labor under the oppression of weak nerves, slow fevers, and bile: the disorders I have mentioned, and the continual perspiration, soon de-

stroys the roses on the cheeks of the young and beautiful, and gives them a pale yellow complexion.

I sat down to give you an account of the weather and climate, which insensibly led me to the consequences of it: every thing but cold is in extremes here, the heat is intense, the rains floods, the winds hurricanes, and the hailstones I dare not tell you how large, lest you should think I take the licence of a traveller. But what I always behold with reverence and awe, and at the same time with pleasure, is the lightning; not an evening passes without it; it is not that offensive glare of light I have been used to see, but a beautiful fire, which plays amongst the clouds, and passes from one part of the heavens to another, in every direction, and in every variety of vibration.

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LETTER XXII.

Motte Jill, September 1766.

AS the rains were not quite over when we set out from Calcutta on the first of September, our progress up the river was exceedingly slow; we were a fortnight getting to Cossumbuzar, where we spent a few days: at Cossumbuzar is an English factory, where a vast quantity of raw silk is prepared, a great variety of piece silk and handkerchiefs are made, besides stockings, gloves, and other articles; the stockings, gloves, &c. are all knit by men.

The company's servants are fond of being appointed to these *out* settlements, because it is more advantageous than the appointments at Calcutta; otherwise perhaps not so agreeable, as there are sometimes but three or four English amidst a number of black people.

Just above Cassambuzar is * *Motté* † *Gill*, or the lake of Pearl, one of the prettiest of the Mahomedan palaces, and is now the habitation of the English resident at the *Durbar* : the spot has its name from a lake of clear water, which surrounds it on every side, except one small entrance; it was made by a former *Nabób* of *Muxadabád*. In case of war, this was a place of security for his wives and children to retire to.

The buildings are in the stile of the country, along the middle of the ground at certain distances, are different sets of apartments, most of the rooms are small and dark; but what I most disapprove of, is the useless expence they have been at for walls, for from every set of apartments, are extended two long heavy walls, which reach on each side to the water's edge; this is the taste in most of their palaces; the walls do not answer the purpose of our garden walls in Eng-

* *Motté*, Pearl.

† *Gill*, a Lake.

land

land (for they plant no fruit trees against them) nor any other purpose that I can conceive, but to divide the gardens into smaller parts, and by that means lessen the beauty, and increase the heat.

The most pleasing amongst their buildings are those in the open stile, apartments which are not surrounded with a wall, but the roofs supported with double and triple rows of light pillars, which have a very elegant effect.

We may easily suppose, that the *Nabób* who expended such great sums of money to build, to plant, and to dig that immense lake, little foresaw that it should ever become a place of residence for an English Chief, to be embellished and altered according to his taste, to be defiled by Christians, or contaminated by swine's flesh.

Much less could he foresee that his successors on the *Musnud* should be obliged to court these Chiefs, that they should

should hold the Subahship only as a gift from the English, and be by them maintained in all the pageantry, without any of the power of royalty.

Immediately above *Motté Gill* is * *Muxadabád*, the present capital of the three provinces, a vile dirty place: the palaces of the Nabób, and houses of the great people, are built of stone, with more expence than taste: those of the common herd, of straw and bamboo, so low that it is difficult to stand upright in them. In this city reside some of the richest merchants in the world.

LETTER XXIII.

Mongheir, Oct. 1766.

PROceeding up the river, we arrived at Mongheir, which is a very large fort, and many good buildings in it in

* The Abad, or City of Muxad,

the

the Indian stile, but the fortifications are a good deal fallen to decay; and as it now serves as quarters for a part of the English army, it undergoes daily alterations.

The country about it is remarkably fertile, beautiful, and healthy. About two miles distant is a house on the top of a very high hill, which commands a vast extent of country, with every thing that can form a romantic and delightful prospect. On one side, the Ganges, with the near and distant rocks; on the other, the fort, numberless hills and valleys, with woods, villages, corn-fields, and gardens; single houses and mosques scattered here and there; elephants, buffalos, camels, and all kinds of cattle, which, with the people, form a moving landscape of great variety, in miniature.

This is a delightful retreat for the commanding officer of the troops; if a breath of air blows from the heavens, one must feel it here.

LETTER XXIV.

Patna, November, 1766.

WE found it extremely tedious, and were almost a month from Casmabuzar to Monghier, and to Patna ten days.

The method of travelling by water is so singular, that I must give you some account of it.

Just before the rains set in, which is about the middle of July, the waters of the Ganges begin to increase, occasioned by the snow on the tops of the hills from whence the river issues (near thirteen hundred miles from the sea) being melted by the sun; as soon as the rains commence it hourly increases, pouring with the most impetuous velocity, and the river has the appearance of a sea. And in some parts, where there happen to be rocks, or very high hills on each
side

side pretty near the river, the water being there pent up, it rises to a prodigious height; and the current is so strong and rapid that it is hardly possible for any boat to stem it.

After about two months, when the violence of the rain begins to subside, the water falls almost as suddenly as it arose; and that which was of late one entire sheet of water, except perhaps some tops of trees, now appears to be a fertile country, covered with woods, corn-fields, and other plantations; and the different arms which the river branches into, form many little islands, which in the rainy season one has no idea of.

Some of those little islands produce three and four crops yearly; rice, which grows only when it is covered with water; after that, corn; then water-melons, &c.

The progress up the Ganges is so exceedingly slow, that the voyage from
Calcutta

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Calcutta to Allahabád takes near three months to perform it in; at the same time that it is common to go from Allahabád to Calcutta in twenty days. When a boat comes down the river it takes the middle of the rapid stream, which carries it down without the help of oars or sail; but it is extremely dangerous, on account of the many turnings, which require a dextrous management; and likewise from the many smaller arms, which discharge themselves into the great river, and cause such an eddy from the meeting of two or three currents, that the largest *budgeroo* cannot stand it, but is whirled round and round like a mill-sail, and sometimes over-set; by which misfortune many European lives have been lost; as to the black people, they generally swim so well as to escape to the shore.

A *budgeroo* is not much unlike a city barge; the covered part generally divided into two pretty good rooms, and an open
varander,

varander, carrying from ten to twenty oars, and as many men, called *dandys*; the master, who steers, is called a *sarang*.

These fellows are very dextrous in their way, and seem to have the property of fishes; at least I must look upon them as amphibious animals, for the water appears to be as much their element as the land: in the passage up the river they mostly tow; but when they come to a creek, of which there are many very broad, they fasten the rope round their waists, and, throwing themselves from the land, which is often very high, swim across, dragging the *badgeroo* after them.

When the squalls of wind and rain come on, if they can find no place to lay by, they jump into the river, and hang with their hands upon the edge of the boat, to keep it steady, with just their mouths above the water; in this manner they continue till the squall is over. The
work

work of towing, or, as it is called, tracking, is sometimes exceedingly laborious; for the banks, which, when the river is lowered, are the height of a house at least above the water, are so softened by the rains, that the *dandies* sink mid-leg at every step they take; frequently large pieces of the banks give way, and by their fall boats are sunk or over-set.

Sometimes they row; then it is they seem to enjoy themselves, singing all together, with great vehemence, some songs peculiar to their employment.

A family has frequently two *budgeroos* besides boats; one of the boats is for cookery, the others for servants, provisions, furniture, and other necessities; for whenever people remove from one place to another, they are obliged to carry all these things with them, even palenqueens, carriages, and horses, so that the troop of attendants of every kind amounts to a great number of people.

When one chooses to dine, &c. the *budgeroo* is stopped, and the boats which are wanted come round it, and the dinner is served with as much order as on shore; it is surprising how they can cook half a dozen or more dishes, in a boat only defended from the air by a tilt made of mats.

Except in the squalls, which are frequent in the rainy season, it is a most easy method of travelling, and, when a party of *budgeroos* go together, very agreeable.

When the *budgeroos* stop at night, the *dandies* make their fires on the shore, each *cast* by themselves, and boil their rice, which is all they live upon.

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LETTER XXV.

Patna, Nov. 1766.

TRavelling by land is very inconvenient, and on account of the number of attendants very expensive; for as there are no carriage roads, the only method is in *palenqueens*.

Therefore it is necessary, before any person sets out on a journey, to have relief of *bearers* laid at certain distances; which is done by giving notice to an officer for that purpose, who sends orders to all the *fouzdars*, which are governors of districts, and are answerable for the behaviour of the people they provide.

There are no inns upon the road, or other convenient places to stop at; therefore it is necessary to have two sets of tents, that the one set may be advancing for the reception of the travellers, while they

they repose themselves in the others. As the journies by land are mostly made in the hot season when the rivers are dry, they generally travel by night, and lay by in the heat of the day.

LETTER XXVI.

Bockapoor, March 1767.

B*ockapoor* is a pleasant village on the banks of the Ganges, about three miles above *Patna*; in it at present are cantonments for about a third part of the English army: these temporary cantonments are small houses called *bungaloes*, made of straw and bamboo. About four miles farther up the river, at a place called *Dinapoor*, the company is carrying on a considerable building, which is to contain barracks and accommodations for the troops, and to be the head quarters in this province.

Patna, the capital of the province of *Babar*, is a very large fortified town, built close on the banks of the Ganges, the town and suburbs not less than five miles in length ; but the breadth is in no proportion, being in some parts not more than a single street ; for in this climate every one is desirous of being near the river. There is a fort and many large stone buildings in the Indian stile ; but the greatest part of the town is composed of straw huts, which make a miserable appearance. The streets are mostly extremely narrow, and as none of them are paved, the town is intolerably dirty in the rainy season, and dusty in the dry.

Patna is a place of very great traffic. The English company have one of their most considerable factories there, where they carry on a great trade in salt-petre, besides opium, salt, bettlenut, and tobacco, which are the chief branches of commerce in this part of the country.

The French and Dutch have likewise factories there.

Carpets are manufactured in the place, and a coarse sort of painted callicos, figured table-linen, and some very ordinary wrought muslins. *Patna* is famous for * *hookers* which are said to be made better here than in any part of India, particularly the part called the *chillim*, or the cover for the fire; some of them are copper inlaid with silver, of most curious workmanship. They have various other trades, for such manufactories as are useful in the country.

The houses being built of straw is the cause of frequent fires in the towns, particularly in the cold season, for then the people make a little fire in their huts to warm themselves by; and from their natural heaviness they fall asleep near it, which often costs not only their own lives, but many others: and this calamity seems more peculiar to *Patna* than any other

* The Indian smoking-pipe.

place, for fires have not only happened there oftener, but with greater violence.

In a late fire, a great number of Mahomedans retired to a mosque, superstitiously believing that it would be an asylum from the flames; but the unhappy victims did not find it so, for although the mosque, which was of stone, did not blaze, it heated to such a degree, that the poor creatures were scorched to death.

A Mahomedan of some rank who resides in the town being absent for the day, had the misfortune to have his * *zanannab* burned, wherein were his women and children to the number of twenty persons: the women knew their danger, but, either dreading the jealous rage of their husbands, or the disgrace of being exposed in public, did not attempt to make their escape, and perished.

The English factory was burned down, and may suffered in their effects: as to

* The womens apartment, Seraglio.

the black people, the destruction was great to their houses and their goods, and several hundreds of them lost their lives.

All this calamity seems to give them no caution to guard against the like in future, for still fires are constantly breaking out; and when they find themselves surrounded by the flames, they are so overpowered by the distress it occasions, that they stand looking on each other with terror and astonishment, and are so far from taking any pains to prevent the fire from spreading, that many of them are not able to remove themselves or their children from the danger.

The country around *Patna* is flat and open, a dry soil and tolerably healthy; but the heat is great, and the hot winds particularly disagreeable, coming for some hundred miles over a country, the greatest part of which is burning sand, it increases in heat as it passes, bringing along immense clouds of dust.

LETTER XXVII.

Allahabad, June 1767.

AS I have already given you an account of the method of travelling by water, my voyage from *Patna* to this place can afford you no entertainment. The only considerable city on the way is *Benaras*, in the province of that name. This province is governed by a *Hindoo rājah*, formerly tributary to the emperor, but now to the subadar *Sujah Ul Dowlet*; and, as is usual in such districts as are governed by *rājahs*, is peopled almost entirely by *Hindoos*.

The city of *Benaras* is the famous seat of Eastern learning and science, where particularly the *Sancrit* language, and the principles of the *Hindoo* Religion, are taught to children of the
Brahmin

Brahmin tribe. Peace reigns in their territories; even animal blood is not shed. The priests, who are very numerous, are supported in ease and plenty; the rest of the people are mostly manufacturers, such as weavers, &c.

The road, for a considerable distance before you enter into *Benaras*, is through long avenues of lofty trees, planted there as a shade to travelers, from the inclement heat. Spacious * *tanks* lined with stone, and descended into by stone steps, are made on the road side, where travelers may refresh themselves by bathing, or drinking the water.

Many of the houses are covered with red tiles, a peculiarity which gives *Benaras* more the appearance of an European city than any I have seen in India; for

* Large ponds, of which there are many all over India, always called by Europeans *tanks*; the name given them by the Portuguese.

in general they are flat-roofed, and covered with stone, or *channam*; in other respects, the houses are pretty much in the taste of those built by the *Mussulmen*; the streets are not paved; and, like many other towns and villages in India, great part of it is in ruins; whole streets, with only the walls, or part of the walls of houses, remaining.

LETTER XXVIII.

Allababad, June 1767.

IN order to give you some account of the Inhabitants of *Hindostan*, it is necessary to divide them, so as to speak of each people separately; for a general description can convey no just idea, where there is such a variety in religion, customs, and manners.

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The distinctions I mean are, *Hindoos*, Mahomedans, and Christians; each of these are again divided, particularly the first, into different tribes; or, according to the Indian term, *casts* innumerable.

The *Hindoos*, or, as they have been called when we were less acquainted with this country, *Gentoos*, are the original natives, and the people from whom the country derives its name. It is said, that the people were termed *Hindoos* by their neighbours from the river Indus; and from them the whole country which they inhabited obtained the name of *Hindoostan*, the *Stan*, or country of the *Hindoos*.

Others assert, that the river, as well as country, first obtained its name from the people, who superstitiously believed themselves descended from the moon; which, in the *Sanscrit* language, was called *Hindoo*.

The Indians date their chronology numberless ages before the creation of the world; but, without paying any attention to their fabulous and improbable stories of antient times, we have sufficient proof of the very great antiquity of their nation and religion.

According to their histories, an *Hindoo* emperor, named *Kirshan*, reigned two thousand years before the Christian æra; whose posterity continued on the throne near fifteen hundred years; at which time the country was governed by an emperor of the name of *Murage*, who was contempory with a great king of the *Turcomans*, called *Gustas*, undoubtedly the same *Gustasp*, so celebrated amongst the Persians, in whose time *Zoroaster* first spread the Magian religion in Persia.

According to some accounts, the whole country continued under the government of one emperor till the year after Christ
580;

580 ; at which period, as all things are liable to change, the empire was broken into a variety of independent districts, each governed by a distinct prince, called a *Râjab*. This situation of affairs gave an opportunity to their Mahomedan neighbors to invade the country.

Their lawgiver was *Brahma*, who they say was the most perfect and holy man that ever lived.

Amongst other legendary accounts of their prophet, they say, that he left a book of written laws behind him, which was lost ; but the *Brahmins* composed others, called the *Shastab*, written in the *Sanscrit*, a dead language, known to none but the *Brahmins*, and not to all of them ; there are schools in the country, where this language is taught to children of the *Brahmin* tribes only.

But

But some of the most enlightened amongst the *Brabmins* assert, that there never was any such person as *Brahma*; but that the *Shastab* was composed by the learned of the early ages, and the laws of *Brahma* signify the laws of wisdom.

In all their accounts of antient times the truths are so blended with fables, that it is extremely difficult to distinguish the one from the other; however, whether their first priest or prophet was named *Brahma* or not, it is certain that the *Shastab*, the books which contain all their laws, both religious and civil, and, according to some accounts, all their learning and science, was composed by the *Brabmins*, and in the early ages.

The whole country was divided into four great tribes, or *casts*; the first are the *Brabmins* or priests, whom they hold in great veneration; these are again divided, the first in rank are called *Goseyns*; there are likewise many other different ranks

ranks or *casts* of *Brahmins*, who never marry, eat, or drink, with any but those of their own *cast*.

The next great division is the soldier *cast*: the third comprehends merchants of all kinds and trades: the fourth, all servants and labourers.

But each of these four are divided into a number of *casts*; almost every trade and profession is a distinct one, which they must continue in from generation to generation; the son of a weaver must be a weaver; the son of a shoe-maker must be of the same occupation, and his daughter must marry none but of the same; nor must they ever eat or drink with any but those of their own *cast*.

If any *Hindoo*, man or woman, ever breaks through these rules, such a person, as the term is, has *lost cast*, and can never be received again into their own,
or

or any other, tribe of *Hindoos*; but go amongst a people I shall hereafter have occasion to mention.

The loss of *cast* is dreaded more than the loss of life; therefore these rules have been observed with such exactness, that the highest and lower *casts* may be distinguished from each other by their features, complexion, and turn of countenance.

There are said to be still, in different parts of *Hindostan*, families of the *Brahmin cast*; who, in all the revolutions of the empire, have remained retired, living up to the purity of the antient religion, or the laws of *Brahma*, without any mixture of modern superstition, well versed in all the antient philosophy.

But these, I believe, are easier to be talked of than met with; for it often appears, that these retired persons, who have all the solemnity of wisdom, are
found,

found, upon a better knowledge, to be mere superficial pretenders.

LETTER XXIX.

Allahabad, July 1767.

HOWEVER pure the system of religion might originally be, it is certain the *Hindoos* have no reason, at present, to boast; for the whole of it, at this time, consists in absurd unaccountable ceremonies, which the people do not understand the meaning of; nor, I may venture to say, do many of the *Brahmins* themselves.

The number of holidays their religion commands, engross at least one third part of their time: these days are either feasts or fasts, devoted to some or other of their gods, of whom they tell the
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most ridiculous stories: there is not a god amongst them but some-how or other has signalized himself on some day, which is kept in remembrance of him: many of them, according to their accounts, have descended on earth on particular occasions.

It is observable, that in all translations from Eastern manuscripts, both ancient and modern, the expressions are figurative: the *Shastab* is quite in this stile; the power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes of the Almighty are emblematically described; the Almighty is represented with many heads, many hands, many eyes; wisdom is depicted in the figure of a snake; and, in short, almost the whole class of animals is taken in to represent some or other of his attributes.

These emblematical figures have furnished them with a set of inferior gods; and,

and, through a long course of time, the extreme ignorance and credulity of the people, and the *Brahmins* keeping the knowledge of the *Shastab* entirely to themselves, are become the essential parts of their worship; and taken, not in a figurative, but a real sense.

They believe, that the god whom they worship, is the god of the *Hindoos*, of the *Mussulmen*, and of the Christians; but that it pleases him to be worshiped different ways; that no one must change his religion, therefore it is a fundamental part of theirs, that no person can become a *Hindoo* but those who are born such.

Whether Pythagoras learned any of his opinions from the *Brahmins*, is, at this distance of time, difficult to determine; but it is certain that the *Hindoos* have similar opinions concerning the transmigration of souls; for which rea-

son, they never eat of any thing which has had life, or ever put any insects, not even those of venomous natures, to death. The effect of this is seen all over the country, particularly in Benaras, a province where only *Hindoos* reside; the animals are so unused to fear the hand of man, that birds of all sorts will walk into the rooms, alight on the tables where people are at meals, and feed out of their hands.

The approach of death is by no means terrible to the *Hindoos*, as the soul is immediately to pass into some other animal. Nevertheless, they have an idea of what we call heaven, where the souls of the virtuous are to be received by the Almighty, after they have gone through an infinite number of transmigrations.

The beast they have the greatest veneration for, and are said to worship, is the cow; these they cherish and guard
with

with particular care. If they can redeem a cow, a bull, or a calf, which is doomed to be slain by Mahomedans or Christians, it is a meritorious act; and this is not unfrequently done.

It would be a vain attempt to enumerate all their superstitious opinions and ceremonies. In some of the fasts they undergo great punishments of their own inflicting, beating themselves with rods of iron, and hanging extended in the air by the flesh of their backs upon iron hooks: but the superior *casts* of people neither put themselves to these tortures, or join in the processions, which have all the appearance of a mad rabble running in crouds along the streets, their faces disfigured with marks of *channam*, or red powder, which they throw over each other as a sort of compliment or blessing.

The *Brahmins* practise incredible austerities in matters of no importance; at *Benaras* is one who is revered almost as a god, for keeping a vow he had made many years since, never to sit or lay down, but to stand, with his arms extended above his head; it is not known that he has broke through it. This is one instance, amongst many others of similar kinds, and of equal use to society. It would fill a volume, was I to recount a hundredth part of the variety of punishments and tortures the *Brahmins* condemn themselves to.

LETTER XXX.

Allahabad, July 1767.

THE great virtue of the *Hindoos* is their extensive charity: the *Brabmins* inculcate, with the utmost zeal, the necessity of building and endowing *pago-das* (where themselves are maintained in ease and plenty), feeding the hungry, relieving the poor, and providing against the distresses of their fellow-creatures, whether of their own religion or strangers.

They are simple, and temperate in their diet; the common people live chiefly upon rice; their superiors have the addition of * *gee*, milk, sweet-meats, &c.; it is surprising to think how little

* *Gee*, made of milk, generally that of buffaloes, almost to the consistence of butter, but will keep much longer.

their usual expence is, but still they are not without extravagance, for although they live in this abstemious manner, they spend vast sums of money in * *tamashes* : this they do on the marriage of their children, or in honour of their gods ; all ranks of people have *tamashes*, according to their different abilities ; the money spent in them is in lights (for they illuminate the houses in the inside), ornaments, music, dancers, and perfumes.

They are mild and inoffensive in their manners, even to timidity, and a dastardly submission to superiors : this is the characteristic of the generality of the *Hindoos* : but the fighting *casts*, the principal of which are the *Rajapoots* and *Mahrattars*, are an exception to this rule ; the last of these are a bold, hardy nation ; and the most formidable of any now in *Hindostan*.

* *Tamashes*, all kinds of shews, entertainments, or processions.

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The *Mahrattors* fight chiefly on horse-back, and every man finds his own horse: besides the frequent incursions they have made into different parts of the country, under various pretences, on their own account; armies of them sometimes enter into the service of the Mahomedan powers. Notwithstanding the pay they are promised by these powers, and perhaps sometimes receive, their chief aim is plunder; therefore when two armies are engaged, they pour upon the rear of the enemy, amongst the women and baggage, where they cause great confusion, and leave nothing behind them which they can possibly carry off.

They are formidable enemies, but unsteady friends; as they follow the constant maxim of all black powers, changing sides as the face of affairs alters, and never keep to any engagement they enter
into

into if they find it more convenient to break it.

They are excellent horsemen; and curious in their breed of horses, which are much valued all over India, as being uncommonly hardy and very swift.

The *Mahrattors*, though *Hindoos*, differ from the other nations in Hindostán, in many material points, and appear to be quite another people; their country is near our settlement of Bombay, on the coast of *Malabár*, but they are scattered across the peninsula almost to the coast of Coromandél.

The *Hindoos* never bury their dead; those whose friends can afford the expence are burned; others are thrown into the nearest river; and it is not uncommon for them, when very near their end, to be, by their own desire, carried and laid at the water's edge, especially if

if the river has any sacred character in the history of their religion, that, when they expire, their bodies may be washed away by the tide. It sometimes happens that the poor creatures lay in this state a day or two; but the apprehension they are under of not being thrown into the river, or their dead bodies being touched by any but those of their own *cast*, makes them readily undergo this punishment.

There is a particular *cast* who always carry their dying parents and relations to the water's edge, and fill their mouths, ears, and noses, with mud, and then leave them to their fate.

LETTER XXXI.

Allabad, July 1767.

THE *Hindoo* women we can know little of, as none but the very lowest are visible: they are almost in their infancy married by the care of their parents to some of their own *cast*. Every *Hindoo* is obliged to marry once: and polygamy is allowed, but there is generally one wife who is held as superior to the rest. The women have no education given them, they live retired in the *zanannabs*, and amuse themselves with each other, smoking the *hooker*, bathing, and seeing their servants dance.

There is one well-known circumstance relative to these women, which is the most extraordinary and astonishing custom in the world; I mean their burning themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands: this custom is not at present so frequent as formerly, they cannot burn without permission from the Nabób of the province, and

and it is much to be hoped, that the English will in future prevent those Nabobs we are in alliance with, from giving any such permission, but there has been within a very short time at least one instance.

I have endeavoured to find out what could give rise (if you'll permit me the expression) to such a barbarous exertion of virtue; but it is difficult to find out the cause of institutions of so antient a date, therefore I do not depend on either of the following reasons, although they have each their advocates, who insist strongly that their opinion is the right one.

The first is, that it was so common for women to poison their husbands, that this institution was necessary to prevent it.

The other is, that the *Brabmins*, to promote their own interest, first persuaded the women that it was for the everlasting

lasting good of their families; that their souls would not enter into any groveling insects, but animate a cow, or some such noble animal, and that their term of purgation would be shortened, and they would have the fewer transmigrations to go through, before they become pure enough to be received by the Almighty in Heaven.

Whatever may be the cause, it is however certain, that the *Brabmins* greatly encourage this practice, and that they receive great benefits from it; for the woman, when she is brought out to sacrifice herself, is dressed with all her jewels, which are often of considerable value; when the pile is prepared, and the woman has taken leave of her friends, she throws all her ornaments from her, which the priests take for themselves.

It is said, that the strict rule of *casts* is on this occasion sometimes dispensed with; and the daughter of a mother who has burned,

burned, may be married to a man of a higher rank.

I cannot myself subscribe to the first opinion of the cause of this custom, because they have many of them more than one wife, and only one is permitted the honour of burning.

No people in the world have stricter notions of the honour of their women, particularly those of the higher *casts*. If any one has an improper connexion, such a woman has not only lost her *cast*, but it is an indelible stain upon the honour of her family: and in case of an elopement, it has been known that the girl has been pursued and recovered by her parents, who have put her immediately to death, to expiate, by her blood, part of the disgrace she has brought upon them.

Nevertheless, the retirement of the women does not appear to be a part of the religion, or caused by the jealousy of the men, so much as an idea of delicacy
2 and

and dignity, in concealing themselves from vulgar eyes.

LETTER XXXII.

Allahabad, July 1767.

THE tribe of *Hindoos* the English have most connexion with, and are obliged to put most confidence in, are in the third great division, called *Banians*, who are a kind of merchants, or rather brokers in every kind of merchandize. Every European both civil and military, who has either trade, or troops under him to pay, is obliged to have one of them in his service, who is a sort of steward: one of them is likewise necessary at the head of every family, to hire and pay the servants, and purchase whatever is wanting, for nothing can be bought or sold without them.

They

They are exceedingly indolent; crafty, and artful to an astonishing degree; and shew in all their dealings the most despicable low cunning, which makes them not to be depended upon for any thing: they have not only a secret premium out of whatever they pay to servants, tradespeople, &c. but keep them out of their money long after the master supposes they have been paid.

They are the most tedious people in the world, for besides the holidays, which they will on no account break through, they have a method of putting every thing off till to-morrow: when it is found out, as it often is, that they have told an untruth, they have no shame for it, but immediately tell another and another; nothing can hurry them, nothing can discompose or put them out of countenance; nothing can make them angry; provided their gains are sure, the master may fret to find his business go on slowly, may abuse them for want of honesty, may argue with them for their ingratitude,

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may

may convict them of falshood and double-dealing, it signifies nothing; the same mild and placid countenance remains, without the least symptom of fear, anger, or shame.

Those who are concerned with us usually speak pretty tolerable English; they are many of them worth large sums of money, and frequently lend a great deal to their masters, mostly at the interest of nine or ten per cent.

By being in the service of an English gentleman, particularly if he has any considerable rank or employment in the company's service, they have great advantages, not only from all his concerns, out of which they have a profit, but it enables them to carry on their own with the greater security; besides their wages, which, according to their master's situation and their own importance, is from a hundred to ten *rupees* a month, they are many of them of consequence amongst their own people, keep
a pa-

a palenqueen, horses, and a number of servants.

Those who act in that capacity to a Governor or Commander in Chief, pretend to a superior rank, and take the title of *Duan* instead of *Banian*.

LETTER XXXIII.

Allababad, July 1767.

THE temples of the *Hindoos* are called *pagodas*, they are generally square high buildings of brick or stone, but with very little taste. In the Decan and Carnatic are many of these *pagodas*; but in Bengal and up the Ganges very few, except in the province of Benaras. I must observe in favour of the *Hindoos*, that, in spite of the absurdity and unmeaningness of most of their ceremonies and

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customs,

customs, their strict observation of them does them honor.

To sum up their general character in few words, they are gentle, patient, temperate, regular in their lives, charitable, and strict observers of their religious ceremonies. They are superstitious, effeminate, avaritious, and crafty; deceitful and dishonest in their dealings, void of every principle of honor, generosity, or gratitude. Gain is the predominant principle; and as a part of their gains bestowed in gifts to their priests, or charities to the poor, will procure their pardon, they can cheat without fearing the anger of their gods.

But for the *Brahmins*, to whom alone all their learning is confined, it is a circumstance not much to their credit; that while all other nations, those in Europe particularly, have been making constant improvements and new discoveries in science, they have contented themselves with that which has been

handed down to them from their forefathers; and still less, that they have made so ill a use of their learning; and, instead of informing those whose *casts* forbid them to enquire into the laws and religion, in such plain and simple truths as might tend to virtue and happiness, they have encumbered them with forms, and filled their heads with stories; which can tend to no other purpose but to raise their own importance.

LETTER XXXIV.

Allahabad, July 1767.

WHENEVER a *Hindoo* has occasion to cross the *Carramnassa*, or the *Accursed River*, which in the dry season is fordable, he gives a *Mahomedan* money to carry him over upon his back, that his feet may not be wet with the accursed water, which is a thing

forbidden by their religion. In this, and many other instances, the letter of the commandment is observed, while the spirit of it is lost; for I think one cannot doubt, but that the intention of this law, was to keep them within their own provinces.

Their being forbid to eat or drink of what has been touched but by those of their own *casts*, is likewise a great help to migration, as they cannot always meet with those of their own *cast* to provide what they want; and is particularly calculated to prevent their taking voyages by sea. It is astonishing with what strictness the *Hindoos* observe these rules, even to starving themselves to death rather than break through them.

The children of the *Hindoos* are not to be tempted to eat any thing forbidden, either by persuasion, or by offering them the greatest delicacies; which I have often been witness of.

It

It is the first impresson their minds receive; they are used to seeing it strictly observed by their own and other *casts*; it grows up with them as the first, and most absolute law; and is perhaps observed with more strictness than any other law, religious or civil, by any nation under the sun.

It must be acknowledged, that the religion of the *Hindoos* is now so overgrown with absurd and ridiculous ceremonies, that it is difficult to believe there has ever been any degree of common sense in it.

And yet, upon a closer examination, one must admit, that the division into *casts* and tribes promotes subordination. It is not peculiar to this country, but has been observed by other nations in the early ages: amongst the Romans, the sacerdotal office was likewise confined to the Patricians; as amongst the

Hindoos, it is to the *Brahmins*; and in the Levitical law we are told, that the ark was carried by the tribe of Levi, and to them was the priesthood for ever. Something like it likewise exists at present in the ideas of noble blood amongst the French and Germans.

The impossibility of rising to any higher *cast* checks ambition in the bud. Their abstinence from animal food promotes temperance. Their being forbid to eat of certain food, and with none but those of their own *casts*, prevents migration. Their belief in the transmigration of souls makes them tender of the lives of all animals, and produces an aversion and horror at the idea of shedding blood.

It is no wonder, that, being taught to revere and preserve a cow on account of its utility, or to admire an elephant for its sagacity and strength; and the river Ganges, as causing the fertility, and faci-

facilitating the commerce of their country; and these opinions delivered to them in the lofty and figurative stile of the East; it is no wonder, I say, that they should rank the two first in the number of their demy gods, and believe that the other is able to cure diseases, and wash away sin.

When the priests of the Christian religion were first compelled to celibacy, it seems to have been intended, that the acknowledged purity of their characters should gain the most perfect veneration. But long after it was known that this end was not answered by it, it was still held to be a sin for any priest to marry.

If this and other institutions in the Christian church, were held sacred after the first intention of them was forgot; it is not at all surprising, that the antient customs of the *Hindoos* should be yet observed, although the use of them is either lost, or not understood.

No

No Martin Luther has arisen to open their eyes; and was it possible that any *Brahmin* by translating the *Shastab* from the *San/crit* to the vulgar tongue, or by explaining it according to common sense, was to endeavour to free them from their absurdities, they are too ignorant, and too indolent, to be benefited by it.

Monsieur Montesquieu, who has unravelled the causes of different manners, says,

“ Si avec cette foiblesse d’organes qui
 “ fait recevoir aux peuples d’orient les
 “ impressions du monde les plus fortes,
 “ vous joignez une certain paresse dans
 “ l’esprit, naturellement liée avec celle
 “ du corps, qui fasse que cet esprit ne
 “ soit capable d’aucune action, d’aucune
 “ contention; vous comprendrez que
 “ l’ame qui a une fois reçu des impres-
 “ sions, ne peut plus en changer, c’est
 “ ce que fait que les Loiz, les mœurs, &
 “ les

“ les manieres, même celles que paroîs-
 “ sent indifferentes, come la façon de se
 “ vetir, sont aujourd’hui en orient,
 “ comme elles étoient il y a mille ans.”

LETTER XXXV.

Allahabad, July 1767.

BEFORE I proceed to give you any account of the Mahomedans of India, perhaps it will not be improper to speak a little of those revolutions by which they became masters of the country.

Hindostán, from very early ages, has suffered from invasions; for so long since as three or four hundred years before Christ, it was invaded by Alexander the Great; and before that time, it is said, that Darius king of Persia had invaded a small part of the country. The writers
 of

of Alexander's life mentioned in Hindostán the priests, whom they called Bracmani, and described them as holding some of the same tenets and opinions which we know the *Brabmins* observe at this time. There is no doubt of their being the same people: the natives are represented as luxurious and timid; the palaces of the kings are said to have abounded in gold and precious stones; the kings voluptuous and effeminate, keeping a great number of concubines; and that, after having crossed the river Indus, when he arrived at a city called *Dadala* (which, by the situation and similitude of names, perhaps is *Delhi*), he found that the Barbarians, through fear, had entirely deserted it.

After Alexander had indulged his boundless vanity, by conquering part of the country, he left it to the quiet possession of the peaceable *Hindoos*, who governed Hindostán till the invasion of the Mahomedans, by whom the country
has

has long since been governed, and partly peopled. The Mahomedans are numerous throughout Hindostán, particularly in the great cities; and near the capital they are perhaps equal in number to the *Hindoos*; for from the first of the Musfulmens conquering Hindostán, even to this day, their party has been constantly increasing by shoals of adventurers from Persia, Tartary, and other Mahomedan countries.

LETTER XXXVI.

Allahabad, July 1767.

AFTER the death of Mahomed, his successors issued forth from Arabia, and conquered the whole country of Persia, where they established different principalities. The Persians were at that time followers of the laws of Zoroaster, and held a veneration for fire, agreeable to the doctrine of that philosopher.

sopher. When the Mahomedans conquered their country, great numbers of them fled into Hindostán; and their descendants at this day reside on the coast of Malabár, still following their antient religion; they are called *Persees*, and sometimes *fire-worshippers*.

After the conquest of Persia, the Mahomedan faith was embraced by the *Afghans*, or *Patans*, a people who inhabited the mountainous districts which separate Persia from the river Indus; and in 975 they established a Mahomedan kingdom.

The sultans of this new kingdom soon began to make inroads into the neighbouring country of Hindostán. But the Râjahs defended themselves for some time with much bravery. The country, however, as far as Delhi, and from thence to the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges, was at length almost entirely

tirely conquered by the Patans, about the year 1217; ever since which time the Mahomedan government has spread and increased.

The *Afghan* sultans had but just effected this conquest, when they were themselves expelled from their own original dominions in the mountains by as remarkable a revolution; which was as follows :

The Mogule Tartars on the north side of India and China, under their prince Chengis or Zingis Chan, having entered into Persia, and overthrown all the Arabian principalities there, and throughout all Asia; the chan sent his generals likewise against the Patan dominions, which they seized, and pursued the *Patans* even into Hindostán; from whence they were repeatedly repulsed, with great slaughter.

About

About the year 1397, *Amir Timer*, otherwise Tamerlane, the conqueror of Persia and Asia Minor, a successor of Zingis Chan, taking advantage of the state of the Patan government in Hindostán (which was torn and weakened by internal divisions and factions amongst the great men) invaded the country in person, and soon made himself master of the chief part of the empire. He marked his rout with devastation, fire, and sword; massacred, without mercy, thousands and tens of thousands. After he had subdued the country, he returned again to his capital Samarcande. Tamerlane was the first of the present race of kings who conquered Hindostán.

After the return of Tamerlane to Samarcande, the country was again governed by Afghan emperors: but the power of the empire was soon destroyed by civil discords, through which means it again became a prey to invaders.

Sultan

Sultan Baber king of Indija, a descendant in the direct line from Tamerlane, invaded Hindostán; and at last, in 1525, conquered the Pitan kings of Delhi; his successors continually extended the empire; and, at the latter end of the reign of Aurenzebe, who died in 1707, were become masters of the whole, except a few small principalities on the coast of Malabár.

From this summit the Mogul empire began immediately to decline, until Nadir Shaw, known in Europe by the name of Thammas Kouli Khan, who, from a soldier of fortune, had raised himself to the throne of Persia, invaded Hindostan in 1738; he laid the country under heavy contributions, and carried such amazing wealth away with him as appears incredible; he obliged the Mogul to cede to him many provinces to the northwest of the river Indus.

The last invader was Abdalla, a foldier of fortune, who raifed himfelf under Nadir Shaw, and adopted his principles: he now poffeffes all the provinces which were ceded to Nadir Shaw by the Mogul.

Befides thefe foreign invafions, many internal revolutions have occurred; the country has undergone great diftreff from incurfions of the Mahrattors, who, as well as all other enemies, were encouraged by the diftraction of the ftate, which has always been occafioned by the villanies of the * Omrahs, the general depravity and indolence of the people, or the weaknefs of the emperors.

The country has been torn by the intestine wars of the Mogul, or royal family; brothers have contended againft brothers for the empire. In moft of the wars, treachery and affaffination have

* Lords.

ful-

supplied the want of courage, and decided the contest in favour of the most fortunate villain ; who, after his success, has often been assassinated by a cabal of statesmen, or, sinking into the effeminacy of the *zanannah*, become the tool of their ambition.

LETTER XXXVII.

Allahabad, July 1767.

UNDER the reigns of those Moguls who had wisdom, activity, and courage, equal to the task of governing such an immense empire, it was regularly divided into districts, governed by subadárs ; and under them, nabóbs to the different provinces, subject and accountable to the king ; except some provinces and smaller districts, which continued to be governed by *Hindoo* princes, called *Rájahs*, tributary also to

the Mogul. But I must observe, that the *Mahrattas* never were conquered; and that likewise there are some small districts in distant parts of this immense country, which never submitted to the Mahomedans; and others, who, although they have yielded to the Mogul's troops, have again revolted.

Nevertheless, in these reigns the empire flourished, cities and forts were built, mosques and other public edifices were erected, superb baths were dug, gardens and prodigious woods were planted; the grandeur of the court surpassed imagination, and the fame thereof extended itself around the globe.

Agra was formerly the largest, richest, and most capital city in the empire; where there was a royal palace, though the chief residence of the Great Moguls was at Lahor: but, within this last century, the court has been kept at Delhi.

Tra-

Travellers, who visited those places in the reign of Aurenzebe, have given almost incredible accounts of the grandeur and magnificence of the palaces, the mosques, the *pagodas*, mansoleums of the Mahomedans, baths, &c. &c. The country was ornamented with pleasure-houses and plantations: particularly between Agra and Lahor, which is the distance of one hundred and forty leagues, it was covered with beautiful plantations, which formed the most delightful avenues almost from one city to the other.

But above all, they are lavish in describing the grandeur of the throne at Delhi, which was composed of the most precious gatherings of the Moguls for generations, and contained jewels innumerable, and of incredible value.

Were there no vestiges of antient grandeur remaining, one might easily believe, that in the days of prosperity the riches

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of the Moguls, as well as the nabóbs and other great men, was immense, when one considers the revenue of such a prodigious country, and that, from the nature of the government, the riches are in the hands of a few; a despotic government, a few lords, and many slaves! and that, from the amazing fertility of the earth, it produces all that is useful for its inhabitants, as well as most of those articles which are highly prized as the luxuries of life by all civilized nations. The country is interspersed with numberless rivers, which fertilize the land, and facilitate an internal commerce; and great part of it bounded by the sea, to the ports of which ships resort from all the quarters of the globe.

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LETTER XXXVIII.

Allahabád, Aug. 1767.

FROM the riches of the country we must henceforth speak of it in its decline. The invasion of Nadir Shaw first struck at the grandeur of the Mogul empire. In this and the following wars, and the distraction of the state occasioned by them, the reins of government were slackened: the distant *Nabóbs* and *Rájabs*, taking advantage of this imbecillity of the court of Delhi, revolted, refusing to pay the annual subsidies, and asserted their independence by force of arms; till by degrees, many of the *subahs* have become hereditary possessions, though originally only vice-royalties, the governors of which were subject to be recalled at the pleasure of the Mogul. Hence it is, that the Nabób of Arcót, the Nabób of Muxadabád, and indeed I may say all the others, are independent of the Mogul; though some of them are

now reduced to a dependence on the English.

The present imperial family are of the race of Tamerlane, but in a situation truly worthy of compassion; little now remains of the grandeur of that family, which for 200 years governed one of the most rich, populous, and extensive empires in the world. And indeed in the country itself little more remains than the ruins of its ancient grandeur.

The late *Mogul Allum Gire* found the country, over which the court had any real authority, reduced to a few small districts round Delhi; I say the court, for he himself had no authority, being kept a prisoner of state by his *Vizier* or Prime Minister, who at last put him to death, placing on the * *Musnud* one of his grandsons, a son of *Shaw Allum*: by the most cruel and arbitrary policy, he keeps the young prince in the same subjection he did his grandfather.

* Throne.

Shaw

Shaw Allum *, then called the *Shaw Zadab* †, escaped from Delhi before his father's death, and made many attempts to raise an army, but in all his endeavors he was unsuccessful; reduced to the necessity of going to crave assistance of different Nabóbs, who either had not the power, or the will to serve him, he likewise asked the assistance of the English; and was once joined by the *Mabrattors*; But the war was too unprofitable for those plunderers to continue their assistance. At length, after various unsuccessful attempts, he became entirely in the power of *Sujah ul Dowlat*, usually known by the name of *Sujah Dowlah*, Nabób of Oud.

The English were at that time at war with *Sujah Dowlah*, against whom they took up arms on account of his joining, and supporting, *Cossim Ali Chan*, the deposed Nabób of *Muxadabád*. *Sujah* was defeated by the English, who made peace

* King of the world,

† The King's Son.
with

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with him, upon condition of his yielding up the province of Allahabád (which he had lately usurped) to the *Shaw Zadab*, who threw himself under our protection.

The English put the prince in possession of this province, placed him on the throne, and proclaimed him Emperor by the title of *Shaw Allum* *; the revenues of his province, and a certain annual sum paid to him by the company out of the revenues of Bengal, amount to about thirty *lacks* of *rupees* yearly, which is equal to 370,000 £. this is the whole he has to support the rank of an Emperor, in a country where money is not of one quarter the value it is in Europe.

We are now in alliance with both this prince, and *Sujab Dowlab*, who has the title of *Vizier*; but the apprehension the king is in of his *Vizier* (who is at this time the most formidable Nabób in Hindostán, active, enterprising, deceitful,

* His father being now dead.

and

and unprincipled, bound by no laws divine or human, which can interfere with his interest; supple to the greatest meanness to those he fears; a tyrant in power; in short, a true oriental *Great Man*) makes the King desirous of having an army of English always near him; he has given up his fort and palace of Allahabad, to accommodate them with quarters, and pays the extra allowance called *batta*, which is given to the army when out of the provinces*. He resides now with his court and *zanannah*, and several children, in a few *bungaloes*, a short distance from the fort on the banks of the Jumna, a dwelling very unworthy of the imperial dignity; where he keeps up a shabby sort of grandeur and parade, and has a few seapoys in his own pay, just sufficient to attend him when he appears abroad, not at most a battalion; they are clothed after the English custom, but are ill-disciplined, and as ill-paid.

* The provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixá. The company's troops, who are beyond these three provinces, have an additional daily allowance.

This

This Mogul is one of the darkeſt of the Muſſelmens, of a grave deportment bordering upon ſadneſs : of an indolent and inactive life ; ſuppoſed to be the conſequence of repeated diſappointments, which have at laſt left him, perhaps, without even the hope of ever recovering the poſſeſſion of his empire, or even being ſeated on the throne of his anceſtors at Delhi.

His chief amuſement is in ſmoking his *booker*, bathing according to the Mahomedan cuſtom, and his * *barram*, in which he paſſeth the greateſt part of his time : when he goes out, which is but ſeldom, it is with his whole court, himſelf generally upon an elephant : he ſometimes goes upon the river of an evening, which is a pleaſing ſight ; the boats, which are exceſſively pretty, are illuminated ; and the muſic, though always barbarous, ſounds to advantage upon the water.

* Seraglio.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

Allahabad, Aug. 1767.

THE three provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixah, which the English have now so great an interest in, were formerly distinct vice-royalties; but afterwards united under one Nabób or Soubadár; since which time, remarkable revolutions have happened in this *Soubah*. It was usurped by a Tartar, one who had been a servant to the Soubadár, and afterwards an officer in his army—his name was Allaverdi. A grandson of his brother, adopted by Allaverdi, and called *Surajah Dowlah*, was the first who made war upon the English; the distresses the factory underwent at that time, particularly the black hole, the destruction of the Nabób *Surajah Dowlah*, and the changes of Nabóbs since, have been so particularly published to the world, that it is needless to repeat them.

In

In the time of *Surajah Dowlah*, the English held a small fort at Calcutta, and had some English houses in the town; carrying on their trade by permission of the Nabób, to whom they paid duties; companies servants were likewise stationed in different parts of the country, to superintend the manufactories.

In this situation, the Nabób with his numerous army, could not find it difficult to drive out the English, who were few in number.

But on the arrival of a fleet under the command of Admiral Watson, from our other settlements in India, and the army under Colonel Clive, the face of affairs was suddenly changed: the Nabób was defeated, and his general, who, by favoring the English, was the chief cause of his master's fall, was by them placed upon the *Musnud*, but with certain restrictions in favour of his benefactors, and with promise to make full restitution

to all the sufferers by the late war with his predecessor *Surajah Dowlah*. The company's trade and advantages were by this means vastly enlarged, they augmented the army, and the English daily increased in power, riches, and numbers.

But the Nabób not keeping his engagements, it was deemed necessary to depose him; another was raised to the *Musnud* with greater grants to the company, who was afterwards set aside for a third, by whom still more extensive privileges were given than by the former: when the third died, he was succeeded by his son; and his posterity has continued on the *Musnud* till the present time.

By every change the company's servants gained great advantages for their masters, not to mention their own private emoluments. Insomuch that the English company are at this period entire masters of the three provinces, allowing the Nabób who governs under them a certain sum out of the revenues. Such
are

are the revolutions by which the empire of Hindostan has arrived at its present state.

LETTER XL.

Allahabad, August 1767.

THE nature of a despotic government is so well understood, and is in all countries so much the same, that it is unnecessary to enter much into the particulars of the government of Hindostán; besides, it would be extremely difficult, since, in all the connexion of the English with the country, they can discover nothing like a regular code of laws, or, indeed, any but those of the Koran; all of which are interpreted different ways.

But there is one particular, which seems to differ both from the nature of the government, and from the religion of the Mahomedans, so desirous of mak-

ing profelytes; I mean the liberty of conscience allowed to the *Hindoos*; for whether the Mahomedans foresaw that it was impossible to bring about a change, or apprehended danger from making the attempt, it is certain, that, after they had conquered their country, they not only allowed them the free exercise of their worship, but many of them were intrusted with the government of provinces.

The will of the superior is the law; but, as in every state there must be some regulations, there are certain officers appointed for the government of different districts; for collecting the revenues; for trying and determining disputes between the natives; for the settling of these disputes, of what nature soever, there are no absolute laws, but certain old customs, which are always abided by, unless it is more convenient to break through them.

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The prince is subject to no controul from the laws; whilst therefore he can support his authority, to him every one will bow his forehead to the ground, all hands will be clasped in humility before him, every dastardly subject will praise the most infamous of his actions, and tremble at his nod. But, as inferiors expect no justice, they do not think themselves bound to submission, whenever they can extricate themselves from subjection, either by force or fraud.

By the constitution, the lands are all the property of the Mogul; and the Nabóbs, who have made themselves independent of the Mogul, claim the same right in their territories, and farm the lands out to the people; therefore the revenues do not arise from taxes on the estates, but the rents of them. The taxes are on merchandises, the imposts on Goods at different ports, &c.

The

The right of testament is allowed, by which the subject is empowered to dispose of his effects and money to his family.

The appointments are mostly military: the Nabób is the first military officer in the province or provinces which he governs; the Phousdár the next, who generally presides over a very considerable district. Havildárs and Zemindárs are appointed to towns or villages.

The revenues are collected by military force, or at least the appearance of an army; and every thing is calculated to break the spirit of the subject, and inspire him with the most abject fear.

LETTER XLI.

Allahabad, Aug. 1767.

AS the Mahomedans are all Predestinarians, added to the faith they have that whoever is slain in battle goes immediately into paradise, one should expect to find them excellent soldiers. This was undoubtedly the intention of their prophet, who was a martial genius, and founded his empire by conquest.

When the Mogul Tartars first conquered Hindostán, they are said to have been a hardy, warlike, active race of people: who carried their conquests through the land with irresistible valor; though most likely that the effeminacy of the people they had to oppose them, helped as much to promote their reputation and conquest, as their own courage.

It is a common and just observation, that the nature of this climate is such as to enervate every person who resides in it, and to render the most active after a time indolent; this disposition increases, and every generation becomes more and more slothful, which seems to account for the present degeneracy of the Mahomedans of Hindostán.

Nothing can more justly show their present military and political force than the progress of the British arms, since the English, in comparison of the black people, are but as a handful of men.

Not but there are still instances of the seapoys, under the command of British officers, fighting with the greatest bravery; but under black people, they want that continual attention to discipline, which is as necessary as courage. This general depravity and indolence is the cause, that if one man in a century arises,

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possessed of common abilities, a daring spirit, resolution and activity; let him be even of the lowest rank in life, he is certain to carry all before him, and become a great man; when his endeavors once meet with success he is looked upon as invincible, and neighboring powers, who oppose him while they think they dare, on his success will join him, till his army becomes immense; but should ever a reverse of fortune happen, he is deserted at the time he stands most in need of assistance—One of these sort of adventurers is Hyder Alli, now so formidable in the Decan.

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LETTER XLII.

Allahabad, Aug. 1767.

ALTHOUGH the Mahomedans are not so strictly divided into tribes as the *Hindoos*, nor are they by their laws prevented from raising themselves to a higher rank in life, they have nevertheless the same notion of losing *cast*, but they do not observe it so strictly. If any one eats swine's flesh or drinks wine, he ought to lose *cast*, though they often drink secretly, and to excess; but in public, they stand upon great ceremony in these points; so much that a cook who is a *Mussulman* will not dress a joint of pork, nor will any servant at table, though perhaps there be a hundred standing round, remove a plate in which pork has been; unless it is a slave, who having no *cast* cannot be disgraced by this, or any other employment.

The *Harri* or *Hallicore cast* are the dregs of both *Mussulmen* and *Hindoos*, employed in the meanest and vilest offices; people whose selves or parents have *lost cast*. But there is a resource for even the worst of these, which is to turn christians: I mean Roman Catholics; and such are the chief, if not the only proselytes, the Missionaries have to boast of in the east; being mostly such as have committed some very great crimes, or have been made slaves when young, which prevents their ever returning amongst those of their own religion. If any woman has committed a crime so great as to induce her husband, or any other person, to cut off her hair, which is the greatest and most irrecoverable disgrace, she like a thousand others is glad to be received into some society, and becomes a christian: so that most of the black christians are more so from necessity than from conviction.

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The Portuguese priests, of which there are many in India, receive all, baptize, and give them absolution: as soon as they are made christians they call themselves, and are called, Portuguese; the women change their dress, and wear something like a jacket and petticoat; and the men mostly affect to dress like Europeans. Their language is called *Pariar* Portuguese, a vile mixture of almost every European language with some of the Indian. This is however a useful dialect to travellers in many parts of Hindostán, particularly on the sea coast, and is called the *lingua Franca* of India.

These black Portuguese are a numerous people in all those parts of the country which have been long frequented by Europeans.

They are mostly in mean situations, and are looked upon with great contempt by all the other Indians, for the reasons I have mentioned; and indeed it is not
without

without some cause that they think them the worst of people; for besides the general depravity, they have if possible more cunning; but at the same time they are most of them more active, and not so stupid as the others.

The reason of these black christians being called Portuguese, is from a custom which obtained at the time when the Portuguese were the only Europeans known in India; therefore all the proselytes became of their nation. But the real Portuguese have now almost lost all their trade and influence throughout Hindostán: their principal settlement at present is Goa.

LETTER XLIII.

Allahabad, August 1767.

THE Mahomedans, after the death of their prophet, were divided into different sects; these of Hindostán are mostly followers of Ali; and their creed, “*There is but one God, Mahomed is his prophet, and Ali is his friend*” *. This confession of faith is often in their mouths; and in Persia or Turkey, any Christian who should be heard to repeat the confession of the Mahomedan faith, would be obliged to embrace the religion, or lose his life: but whether the Mahomedans who entered Hindostán left the spirit of conversion behind them, or whether they have now been so long used to live amongst people of different

* The creed of the Mahomedans who are not followers of Ali, is, “There is but one God, and Mahomed is his prophet.”

religions

religions that they have forgot it, I know not; but it is certain that we hear of no persecutions on that account; or any attempts to bring over either Christians or Pagans to their religion.

The precepts of their doctrine are very simple; they are commanded to use frequent ablutions; to pray often; to fast sometimes; to abstain from swine's flesh and wine; to give tithes of their goods to the poor: as to the pilgrimage to Mecca, the distance of the country is a sufficient excuse for their not performing it; but those who have made that journey are looked upon with much reverence.

The grandees esteem the commandment concerning wine as intended only for the vulgar; pork indeed they seldom touch, unless it comes under the form of an English ham, which they are very fond of, and evade the law by calling it European

European mutton : the vulgar have seldom an opportunity of breaking these laws ; but when they have, are in general as little scrupulous as their superiors ; the only difference is, that they are obliged to be more secret.

They say five short prayers daily ; and before their prayers are commanded to wash their hands and mouths ; they are to be very attentive while they are repeating these little prayers ; and if by any chance they are interrupted, or their attention called off, by a person's speaking to them, the stinging of an insect, or any other accident, which obliges them to change their posture, they begin and repeat the prayer over again : as it is not always convenient to wash at these times, they sometimes content themselves with making the motion of washing, rubbing their hands and lips, which they say is acceptable. Besides this partial washing, they are commanded frequent bathing ; a circumstance which, besides
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its being a religious obligation, cannot fail of being very agreeable in this hot climate.

As to the law of giving a tithe to the poor, the state is in such distraction, that there are few but what are either above the law, or have nothing to give.

In short, the *Mussulmen* in India are not such strict observers of their religion, as in the countries nearer the tomb of the prophet.

They are all predestinarians ; and believe, that whatever is intended must be ; more particularly the time of every person's death is recorded in the book of fate from all eternity. This belief has a most extraordinary influence on their conduct : they meet death with an indifference which is perfectly astonishing ; and a man who would beg in the most abject manner to avoid a punishment, or

save his goods, will not utter a single word to preserve his life ; so firmly are they convinced of their predestiny.

They believe likewise that whoever is slain in battle goes immediately into Paradise.

It has often been asserted by travellers, that the Mahomedans believe women have no souls ; and are, by the prophet, excluded from Paradise ; however, the learned in the Arabic language, who take their authority from the Alcoran itself, deny this, as an absolute falsity ; particularly he promised his own wives, that if they obeyed his laws, they should have a peculiar place assigned for them.

Nevertheless, whether the Mussulmen of this time have been led into an error by their doctors and commentators on the Alcoran, or whether they have
adopted

adopted it through policy, I know not: but I may venture to assure you, that many of them (in this country at least), if they do not think the women absolutely excluded, still believe that they will not be admitted to the same supreme degree of felicity as themselves: and some of them on this subject will only say, that those few women who have distinguished themselves on earth by any extraordinary virtues, or illustrious actions, may be admitted.

All the Mahomedans have the power of life and death over their own families, their wives, children, and slaves, when any of them commit crimes which the Koran deems capital.

The doubtful points of religion do not disturb their peace; not curious to know the truth, it is not here we must look for learning and science: the wise men of the East have disappeared, I believe, throughout the East; at least in Hindos-

tan, philosophy and philosophers are no more ! even the princes and ministers are so illiterate that some of them can scarcely write or read.

Great riches produced luxury, indolence, rapine, extortion, and injustice, followed. The riches have become the prey of foreigners, and the dignity of the monarch is destroyed by his own subjects.

The Mahomedans, although they are forbid to drink wine, are often intoxicated by their great use of opium ; which they not only take in large quantities, but mix it with the tobacco they smook ; this does not enliven their spirits, or cause them to commit such irregularities as drunken people are subject to ; but makes them sleepy, stupid, and indolent to a great degree ; there is likewise a liquor called *bang*, or *bank*, which they take as a dram ; it has the same in-

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toxicating

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toxicating and soporiferous quality as the
opium.

LETTER XLIII.

Allahabád, Aug. 1767.

MOST of the great men, such as Nabobs, * Niabs, or other persons who are in public employments, lay out their riches in jewels; the reason is obvious; they are uncertain of the continuance of their dignity, and depriving a man of his employment does not leave him to retire in peace with his fortune, but every species of persecution generally follows. A fallen favorite has every thing to fear.

In their prosperity they tyrannize, defraud, and oppress, all under them;

* A Niab is the same to a Nabob as the Vizier is to the Mogul.

seize

seize their property, and take away their daughters: for who shall dare to complain of “*the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*”

But no sooner is his disgrace known, than every one prefers his complaint, with exaggeration: the delinquent has nothing for it but flight; happy if he can make his escape; he leaves his post of dignity to be filled by another; who, most likely, follows in the same path.

Had he invested his money in trade, his merchandize would have been confiscated; or trusted it with a friend, that friend would have forsaken him. But diamonds are a portable treasure, and easily concealed.

All the people of rank keep a great train of servants, to whom they give very little wages; but as they must live, they take advantage of being under their

master's protection ; and indemnify themselves by their impositions on all who have any dependance on their master's favor, extorting presents, &c. and obliging the trades-people to sell them their goods at an under price. In short, "*corruption, like a general flood, has deluged all !*"

As to the common people, I cannot speak of them without pain ; or ever pass through the Buzars of Patna, or any other place, without drawing comparisons between the poor of this country and those of England : these are poor indeed ! scarce any covering, their food rice and water ; their miserable huts of straw : in the cold season they have a fire made with a little straw in the middle of their huts, which smothers them with smoak ; their minds, except what nature gave them, no more informed than the beasts which perish : no liberty, no property, subject to the
tyranny

tyranny of every superior. But what seems to complete their misery is, that whether pinched by cold, or enervated by heat, indolence equally prevails, to such a degree as seems to absorb every faculty; even immediate self-preservation scarcely rouses them from it.

One sees, in passing through the streets, men, women, and children, in abundance sitting at their doors unemployed, like statues; and their aversion to action is so extreme, that when themselves or children are in danger of being crushed by horses or carriages, they will neither move themselves, or put out a hand to draw their infants nearer to them till the moment they are forced to it; and then do not withdraw an inch farther than they are obliged, and with an air of dissatisfaction, which plainly shews how disagreeable it is to them to change their posture.

Ease with them is the greatest good ; and nothing surprizes the Indians so much as to see Europeans take pleasure in exercise ; they are astonished to see people walking who might sit still.

A great *Mussulman*, being invited to an English entertainment where there was dancing, said with great earnestness, he was surprized to see the English ladies and gentlemen take the trouble of dancing themselves, to-be-sure they might have people to dance for them. Perhaps you will think this a very extraordinary observation ; nevertheless it is perfectly in character, and not the least surprizing to those who see daily instances of the effects of this climate.

And yet, what is very extraordinary, there are certain *casts* of both *Hindoos* and Mahomedans, who at times undergo great labour, particularly the *Bearers* ; people whose business it is to carry a

Palenqueen. They are generally stout fellows; the *Palenqueen* is carried by four; and seven or eight, by changing, will carry a person at the rate of four miles an hour for several hours together. The *Dandies* likewise have a laborious employment; and their constantly plunging into the water in the height of perspiration, would kill any person but those who are used to it.

There are other *casts* who are remarkably swift of foot, particularly *Hircarers*; these people are often made use of as spies, both on public and private occasions; frequently they are kept as a sort of running-footmen, and compose a part of the parade of servants who precede a *Palenqueen*; they are likewise sent with letters or messages to very distant parts of the country, and their expedition is extraordinary.

When one gives a *Hircarer* a letter to carry to any distance, he takes off

his turband, and carefully conceals the letter in the folds of it; he provides himself with a brass pot, for the convenience of drawing water from the wells or rivers he is to pass; and a little parched rice, either in a bag or the folds of his garment, which is generally a piece of coarse linen, from his waist to his knees: thus equipped, with a sort of club in his hand, he will make a journey of three or four hundred miles.

The grooms, who are called *sices*, are tolerably swift; for whenever the horse which a *sice* takes care of is rode, he constantly attends with it, in quality of footman; and if the sun is up, a *bearer* will carry an umbrello, and walk equal to the usual pace of riding, which indeed is not very fast in this country.

These instances, however, are sufficient to shew, that the natives are not incapable of using exercise; and, although the climate is certainly extremely relaxing, it
seems

seems to impair their minds more than their bodies; to which indolence of spirit, a despotical government and its consequences has perhaps not a little contributed.

LETTER XLV.

Allahabad, August 1767.

THE general deportment of the Indians is modest and reserved; their address to their superiors humble to a great degree. The salute, or obeisance, which they call *salam* in the familiar way, is raising their right hand to their forehead; before a superior they incline the body, lowering the right hand almost to the ground, and raising it slowly to their forehead three times: But before a prince they almost lay themselves on the ground; and when they ask mercy, they raise their two hands joined

joined together, waiving them with the most mournful air and melancholy countenance; and sometimes, to shew the greater awe and deference, throw themselves into a fit of trembling, as if they were shaken by an ague; but this last piece of mummery is reserved for great occasions. In short, there is no posture too base, no language too humble, no submission or flattery too gross, to be given to those they fear.

The manly sense of human dignity seems lost; and the second man in a despotical government is but the first slave, who repays himself for his submissions to his master by exacting the same servile submissions from others, and the same solemn and respectful behaviour goes down even amongst the common people. No one ever differs in opinion from his superior; or rather, they have learned to allow themselves no opinions.

by

By the law of the Koran, every Mahomedan prince is obliged to attend some hours daily for the public administration of justice to his subjects: and this is observed in India; every Nabób either attends himself, or appoints his *Niab*, to attend on every day except their holidays; and in every town or village the chief of it takes upon him the same right of trying and determining the disputes, between the people in his jurisdiction.

The court of justice, called the *Durbar*, is a large building, open on one side to admit the multitude: there every one repairs who has any complaint to make. The law is not here a science; no council are employed; no acts of state or books of law are referred to. The complainant repairs himself, without ceremony, to the *Durbar*, where, with lifted hands, and exalted voice, he cries out for justice, repeating the words * *Dewoy*

* Justice, my Lord.

Siab,

Siab ! Dwoy Siab ! till he is taken notice of by the judge : when he is brought forward he tells his own tale, with all that humility they always shew before a superior ; and, as in all disputes no one depends on the justice of his cause, but the favour of the judge, it is no wonder that their submissions are excessive. But flattery alone, however gross, is not sufficient, unless accompanied by bribes, which are given by both parties ; presents are made, not only to the judge, but to his favourites, his servants, and all who have any influence with him ; and the most generous, generally, triumphs over his adversary.

The tediousness of suits (a necessary evil, in governments where the privileges of the subjects are guarded by a multiplicity of laws) cannot here be complained of ; the decision is as sudden as it is generally unjust : the verdict of juries is a thing unheard-of, where all depends
on

on one man. The judge condemns and orders the punishment himself.

This is the mode of seeking redress between equals: but does a man suffer oppressions from one in power, a retainer to the court, or from the servants or creatures of one in power, he too well knows, ruin would follow his complaints. Patience is his only remedy! and fellow-sufferers his only consolation!

LETTER XLV.

Allababad, Aug. 1767.

IFEAR that my account of the government and people of Hindostán must appear uncharitable, or you may think, that, with the true spirit of an Englishwoman, I condemn whatever is contrary to the customs of my own country; or perhaps, that I am writing on a subject with which I am only superficially acquainted,

quainted, especially as it is not uncommon with travellers to “ mistake the
 “ abuse of laws, for the laws themselves;”
 and I must confess that the extreme depravity of the people, and the tyranny of superiors, appears so incredible to those who are used to contemplate a milder form of government, that I have not confidence to proceed, till I have first transcribed a passage or two on this subject from *Monf. Montesquieu*, which I hope will serve both as authority and illustration.

“ Comme il faut de la vertu dans une
 “ republique, et dans une monarchie de
 “ l’honneur, il faut de la crainte dans
 “ un gouvernement despotique: pour la
 “ vertu elle n’y est point nécessaire, et
 “ l’honneur y feroit dangereux.

“ Le pouvoir immense du Prince y
 “ passe tout entier à ceux à qui il le confie,
 “ des gens capables de s’estimer
 “ beaucoup eux mêmes, feroient en état
 “ d’y faire de revolutions. Il faut donc,
 “ que

“ que la crainte y abbatte tout les cou-
 “ rages, et y éteigne jufq’au moindre
 “ fentiment d’ambition.

“ Dans les Etats defpotiques la nature
 “ du gouvernement demande une obeiffance
 “ extrême, et la volonté du Prince une
 “ fois connue doit avoir auffi infaillible-
 “ ment fon effet, qu’une boule jettée
 “ contre une autre doit avoir le fien.

“ Il n’y a point de temperament, de
 “ modification, d’accommodemens de
 “ termes, d’équivalens, de pour-parlers,
 “ de remonftrances, rien d’égal en de
 “ meilleur à propofer, l’homme eft une
 “ créature que obéit à une creature qui
 “ veut.

“ On n’y peut pas plus reprefenter fes
 “ craintes pas fur un événement future,
 “ qu’excufer fes mauvais fucces fur le
 “ caprice de la fortune : le partage des
 “ hommes comme des Bêtes, y eft l’in-
 “ ftinét, l’obeiffance, le châtement.

“ II

“ Il ne fert de rien d’opposer les sen-
 “ timens naturels, le respect pour une
 “ pere, la tendresse pour ses enfans et
 “ ses femmes, les loix de l’honneur,
 “ l’état de sa santé, on a reçu l’ordre, et
 “ cela suffit.”

Therefore, when a black man receives
 any order, he does not consider the justice
 of that order, but the favour of the
 person who gives it, and obeys accor-
 dingly.

When the English troops were first in
 garrison at Allahabád, the Mogul (who
 resides near) came with his court one
 night late to the gates and demanded en-
 trance, but without telling who he was;
 the officer of the guard refused to open
 the great gates at that time in the night,
 without which his elephants could not
 enter. The Mogul returned in great
 wrath, and next morning sent to the go-
 vernor of the fort, to desire that the of-
 ficer might be put to death. The answer
 he

he received on this occasion, gave him the first idea of laws, which prevent a superior from taking away the life, or even the liberty of an inferior; and informed him, that it is not by the will of the prince, but the laws of his country, an individual must be tried!

The point with them is not whether a man has done his duty, but whether the prince is offended with him; if he is, confiscation of effects, imprisonment, and death, are all in his power.

I will not pretend to determine (on a point which has been often urged) whether black people are by nature inferior in understanding to white; who can judge of it here, where the nature of the government checks the growth of every virtue? Where property is not secure, what incitement is there to industry? Where knowledge is of no use, who will resign his indolence and ease in endeavors to obtain it? In such a government can we

O

wonder,

wonder, that the general characteristic of the inhabitants should be stupidity and low cunning?

LETTER XLVII.

Allahabad, Aug. 1767.

THE dress of the men as of the women is unchangeable: it is a dress which appears effeminate, but is calculated for the excessive heat of the climate, being free from all tight bandages which might prevent the circulation of blood, and is composed of muslin; they have long drawers, therefore stockings and their accompaniments garters are unnecessary, a shirt quite open at the neck and wrists, and a long jemma, which each reaches down to the ground with long strait sleeves; a sash round their waists and a turband; the Nabóbs and other great men in this part of India have
some-

sometimes their dresses made of shawl in the cold season, and almost every man who can afford it has a shawl which he wears over his head and shoulders; but this is peculiar to the northern provinces, where the cold is severe.

The lower *casts* have only a piece of callico from their waists to their knees, and a turband. The dress of both *Hindoos* and Mahomedans is the same, except that the turbands of the first are rather smaller; and indeed their whole appearance is so much alike, that it would be difficult to know which religion they are of, if the Mahomedans and *Hindoos*, who wear garments, did not tie the strings of their jemmas, the first on the left, the others on the right.

And there are some points in which the religion and custom of the *Hindoos* and Mahomedans bear a resemblance; but in others, no two nations the most distant can be more unlike.

Both are commanded frequent ablution, and both are permitted plurality of wives.

A Hindoos's fear of death is lessened by the consideration that his soul immediately passes into some other man or animal; and every change lessens the number of transmigrations the soul has to undergo, before it becomes perfect.

The Mahomedans are still more fearless, from their notion of predestination, and from their belief, that whoever is slain in battle goes immediately into paradise.

But the Hindoos from their faith in the metempsychosis, and of consequence their aversion to bloodshed (I speak not of the *Rajpoots* or *Marrattos*) are inclined to peace.

The Mahomedans, believing paradise to be the lot of those who fall in battle, are inclined to war.

The

The employment of the *Brahmins* ought to be the propagation of virtue, and the cultivation of the sciences; the employment of the people trade and manufactories, for only one division of the people were destined to bear arms.

But the Mahomedans, who despise the sciences, and hold trade in contempt, think no profession honorable but that of war.

The strong lines in the character of a *Hindoo* are effeminacy and avarice. Those of a Tartar cruelty and ambition.

Not but there may be an ambitious *Hindoo*, and there are many avaritious Mahomedans; for it is observable, whether from the climate, from example, or from both these causes, that the *Mussulmen* of India, particularly those of some generations standing, have contracted the effeminacy and avarice of the *Hindoos*,

at the same time that they have retained the cruelty of the Tartars.

A *Hindoo* may acquire riches, though all the art he can use will never advance him to a higher *cast*.

But the meanest cooly of a *Moor-man*, by entering into the army, may become a general, or even a Nabób.

Almost all the merchants of the country are *Hindoos*; but the menial trades are followed by the people of both religions, though more generally *Hindoos*.

They are more perfect, and more successful, in their favorite occupation of trade, than the *Moor-men* in theirs of war; for although the principles of the Mahomedan faith frees them from the fear of death, their indolence and effeminacy, the consequences of this climate, have left them little more than the parade and name of soldiers, at least when compared with Europeans.

LETTER XLVIII.

Allahabad, Sept. 1767.

WHEN we are told, that a small body of troops, composed of people enervated by the excessive heat of a climate which is not natural to them, distant from every resource, and exposed to all the inconveniencies which an army labors under in an enemy's country; have conquered whole provinces, and brought immense districts under their subjection: We are ready enough to account for it, by attributing to the enemy the defects of pusillanimity and cowardice. But all this has happened in a country where the people are warlike, where the name of soldier is honorable, where there are immense armies, and where the people meet death with intrepidity and composure.

Those who have remarked on the English constitution have observed, that every subject is equally protected by the laws, and equally enjoys the blessing of liberty, except the army; but the moment a man enters into the army, he renounces the privileges of a citizen, to subject himself to the severity of military laws.

Even the Roman republicans, tenacious as they were of their liberty, submitted to the absolute authority of their military leaders.

On the contrary, in this despotical state, where neither the lives, the property, or the liberty of the subject is defended by the laws, where there is in short no law but the will of the Prince, a General has but little authority over his soldiers. They are at once servile in a civil capacity, and mutinous in a military one; and as they do not enter into the army for
any

any certain time, the General has no power to detain them whenever they chuse to quit; and a man by becoming a *seapoy*, so far from subjecting himself to a more rigid law, obtains by it the privilege of oppressing others.

The operations of an army have often been stopt by a mutiny of the *seapoys*, for want of pay. For an eastern prince, superior to all laws, and unused to having any demand made upon him, does not think it necessary to provide for the payment of his troops, and, from that want of punctuality which runs throughout the whole country in every transaction, the promises which are made to them of pay are seldom kept.

In this uncertainty of pay, plunder is the object; and this plunder is not confined to the enemies country, rapine and cruelty mark their steps even in marching through their own provinces; the people endeavor to fly from the villages

lages they are to pass through, with their wives, children, and cattle.

The great officers of the army carry their *zanannahs*, and an infinite number of servants; every common *Seapoy* has at least a wife and servant, and officers have families in proportion; even their little children are not left behind. An immense travelling *buzar* or market always follows. So that in fact a Mahomedan army is an unwieldy multitude, which yields to a small body of well-conducted troops, not from want of courage in the soldiers, but of conduct in the leaders.

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LETTER XLIX.

Allahabád, September 1767.

THE Mahomedans, as well as the warlike nations of the *Hindoos*, are fond of the parade of cavalry, of which most of their armies were composed; but a great and strange defect reigns in these armies. Every soldier finds his own horse; if his horse is killed (as it is generally impossible for him to purchase another), he is no longer a soldier. His livelyhood depends on his horse more than on himself, and according to the value of that he receives his pay. It is astonishing that Mahomedan princes should ever adopt this maxim; for although a Mahomedan, from his faith in predestination, ought not to run away to save his own life, he will most likely avoid all danger to save his horse.

The subadar *Surajah Ul Dowlet Nabób* of Oud, whom I have mentioned in
a for-

a former letter, has modelled his army after the European manner; he makes constant improvements, he casts cannon, he disciplines his troops himself, and is indefatigable in the improvement of his army, and increasing his infantry; so much that none of the other black powers would be able to resist him. Such a man as *Sujah*, having none but *Hindoos* or the Mahomedans of India to contend with, might transmit his name to posterity as a celebrated warrior, and conquer the chief part of the empire.

From this perhaps it may be urged, that all the black princes will see the good consequences of a well-conducted army: they will follow the example of the Europeans, will consider their own numbers; and, after being often beat, at last conquer their conquerors. The Romans, without the advantage of numbers, by copying from all their enemies, became their masters.

And

And Charles the twelfth of Sweden, for some time invincible, taught his enemies the art of war. But experience alone will never effect this; there were other causes. Every Roman fought for himself, for his lands and his liberty: the love of their country was their predominant principle, even to enthusiasm.

And the enemies of Charles the twelfth, with all their experience, would never have been able to oppose him, had not they been governed by a prince who had wisdom and fortitude enough to conquer first the superstition, and ignorant barbarism of his country: he led his subjects to a love of virtue, of the sciences, of their country, and their king!

A despotical government absolutely prevents the growth of these virtues in Hindostán; which occasions mighty and

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insurmountable obstacles to their ever conquering the Europeans.

No one power, however superior to his neighbours, dares attempt it alone, and alliances are dangerous to enter into. Every Mahomedan knows within himself, and consequently judges for others, that honour is too weak a tie, when it interferes with ambition. In states, as in private life, who will dare to trust his neighbour? for it has frequently been seen, that where two or more princes, even amongst brothers, have united their forces, the most powerful, or the most cunning, has raised himself at the expence of his allies, and often by assassination.

If the General of an European army is killed, the next in command supplies his place; and although such an accident is some discouragement, no confusion ensues.

But

But in a Mahomedan army, if the Prince leads them himself and is slain, his soldiers and subjects know not who will succeed; all is anarchy! those who compose the army disperse themselves. There are generally many pretenders to the throne, and a civil war ensues; which makes it impossible to prosecute a national one. If the army is led by the Vizier, or any other General; his death has the same immediate effect upon the army as the death of the Prince, for the order of succession is not marked out to the command of an army, any more than to the throne; and perhaps from the same cause. The General would ever think himself in danger from his successor; and either would devise some plausible or private means to rid him of his rival, or himself fall to his rival's superior cunning.

All these defects being considered, it appears that the Mahomedans in India will never be equal in war to the Europeans, nor will any European army
(where

(where there is the least degree of proportion in numbers) be in danger from them, unless they are joined by other Europeans.

LETTER L.

Allahabad, Sept. 1767.

THE army of the English company on the Bengal establishment is now very considerable, and if we judge of the future by the past, may be still vastly increased; for about ten years since all the Europeans in the service did not amount to the present number of officers.

The army is at present divided into three brigades; each brigade consists of one battalion of ten companies, of European infantry, with their proper officers; one regiment of ten battalions of sea-

seapoys *, or black infantry, with their officers to each battalion, and one called *Jemautdar*, who commands the whole regiment; but all these officers are inferior to the English, for every battalion has an English captain, and an equal number of subalterns as a company of Europeans, and the whole regiment of *Seapoys* has field officers, the same as a battalion of Europeans. There is no instance (I have heard of) of an European soldier being under a black man, for the serjeants are superior in command to even the first black officer in the army. Therefore although in the bulk of the army the natives are most numerous, the power and command is vested entirely in the Europeans.

The artillery is one regiment, of four companies of Europeans, besides black people. One company of artillery is attached to every brigade; to each company of European artillery are four or

* Seapoy in the language of the country means a soldier in general, whether of horse or foot.

five companies of *Lascárs*, fifty in each company. *Lascár* means a sailor; these people are of the sailor *cast*, and mostly from the coast of Coromandél. They are cloathed in a uniform of the same make as the *Seapoys*, only the color is like the regiment they belong to, blue with red; each company of *Lascárs* is commanded by one of their own people called a * *Sarang*, they are employed in all the laborious part of the business which in Europe belongs to the *Matrosses*; the climate makes this relief to the soldiers necessary.

To each brigade is one troop of black cavalry, commanded by an English lieutenant, and used as a guard to the colonel of the brigade.

There are besides the three brigades, some battalions called † *purgunna Seapoys*, commanded by English officers; these are a sort of provincial troops, being

* *Sarang*, a sea captain. † *Purgunna*, a district.
under

under the direction of the chiefs of the English factories.

It is unnecessary to be more particular, as I believe this sketch will serve to give you a general idea of the British force at present in this part of India.

LETTER LI.

Allahabad, Sept. 1767.

UPON a late great holiday amongst the Mahomedans, by desire of the Great Mogul, the English troops were out to be reviewed by him. But it appeared very extraordinary to us, that he did not take the least notice of any thing, or even look on the troops while they were going through their evolutions: if he did look, it was with an eye askant, much practised by the *Musfulmen*; it seems it is inconsistent with dignity to appear to observe.

However mortified the soldiers might be at this seeming neglect, we were still pleased with such an opportunity of viewing a shadow of eastern magnificence ; for although the parade exceeded any thing I had ever seen, it was but a miniature of former grandeur.

All the trappings of dignity were displayed on this occasion; the Mogul himself was on an elephant richly covered with embroidered velvet, the *Howder* magnificently lackered and gilded ; his sons were likewise on elephants.—The plain was almost covered with his attendants; the officers of his court, their servants, and their servants servants, *Seapays*, *Peadars*, &c. &c. did not amount to less than fifteen hundred people.

All except the *Seapays* were according to custom dressed in white jemmurs and turbands, the principal people were on horseback and well mounted: the train was increased by a great many state elephants,

phants, state palenqueens, and led horses richly caparisoned.

The gilding of the *bowders* and *palenqueens*, the gold stuffs of the bedding and cushions, the silver and gold ornaments, the tassels and fringe of various colors, some of them even mixed with small pearls, the rich umbrellas, trappings of the horses, and all together glittered in the sun, and made a most brilliant appearance.

Such is the pomp of eastern kings! and all the Indians of any sort of confidence pride themselves on the number of their attendants.

After the review was over, the Mogul had a public *Divan* or Court. On these occasions he is seated on the *Mustnud*, which is a stand about the size of a small bedstead, covered with a rich cloth; upon it is an oblong plate of silver gilded and turned up round the edges; in this he sits cross-legged, as is the fashion of

the country. In this manner the prince, surrounded by the officers of his court, receives all petitions, and those who have the honor to be presented to him.

The petitioner, leaving his slippers at the outside of the door, enters, making three *Saláms*, and bowing his forehead to the ground, approaches with his petition, and some gold * *mohurs* in his hand, generally says, "take, read this my petition, the day will come when all petitions shall be heard." If the Mogul gives a nod of approbation, the petition and gold *mohurs* are received by an officer for that purpose.

The English field officers were all presented to him; the officer before he enters the *Divan* is taken into another apartment, and a *Moor's* dress is given him, which is a present from the Mogul: this he puts on, then leaving his shoes at the door he enters the *Divan*, making three *Saláms*, after which he advances forward to the *Mustnud*, and presents some gold *mohurs*, which the Mogul orders one of

* Gold Rupees.

his officers to receive, without taking any further notice of the person presented to him.

The dress given on these occasions is generally shewy and slight, embroïdered with plated gold and colored silks, upon muslin, more or less rich according to the rank of the person to whom it is given; the *Sere Peach*, the jewel which ornaments the forepart of the turband, is composed of emeralds, diamonds, and rubies, but mostly imperfect stones.

It is the custom throughout the east, whenever an inferior is introduced to a superior, to approach him with a present of money; the superior's present is always a dress, a horse, an elephant, or a string of pearl, &c. &c.

LETTER LII.

Fort of Allahabad, September 1767.

I AM now entertained and disturbed by the noise of a * *Fakir*; his mother was buried under a large tree, near the walls of this fort, in the bed of The Ganges; and the pious *Fakir* has made a vow never to leave the spot. As soon as it was known that he had taken this resolution, he was in no danger of starving, being supplied with all necessaries by the piety of those weak people, who began to look upon him as a saint: he had not been long under the tree when the rains commenced; and, as the river increased, and extended itself to that part, he was under a necessity of climbing into the tree, where, by the help of a small piece of board, fixed to the upper branches, on which he sits, he

* *Fakir*, *Fakier*, or *Faquier*.

with

with difficulty keeps himself above the water: exposed, without shelter, and almost without clothes, to the inclemency of the heavy rains.

It is astonishing with what resolution these *Fakirs* keep the vows they have made. As his danger is increased, his reputation is increased also; he is surrounded with boats to bring him provisions, and by those who either wish to satisfy their curiosity with the sight of so holy a man, or to be benefited by his prayers.

If his constitution should be able to support him through the changes of the seasons, he is likely to become as great a saint with the Mahomedans, as the *Brakmin* who holds up his arms at Benaras is with the *Hindoos* *.

The *Fakirs* are mostly ill-looking wretches, from several causes; they often

* There are *Fakirs* of both religions.

let their hair and beards grow, without ever combing or washing themselves, and affect a sort of penance, by covering their heads with ashes, turning their eyes across, and distorting their features.

At Benaras I saw a company of *Fakirs* of the fighting *cast*. These fellows, who join the character of priest, soldier, and beggar, carry terror wherever they go, particularly as they are in large parties: they were armed with a target, a *matchlock*, and pike; a piece of cloth round their middle, and a turband, was their whole dress.

I am informed, that there are many of these fighting priests in the distant provinces, who are employed as soldiers; but it is very uncommon for them to strolé so far down The Ganges.

Bulwant Zing, the Râjah of the province of Benaras, is tributary to the Na-
bôb

bób *Surajah Ul Dowlet*; they are now at great enmity, although not at war: *Bulwant Zing* has lately been ordered to repair to Oud, to give an account of his administration, and pay his accustomed tribute; which he does not think proper to comply with; but is retired to a strong fort he has upon the banks of The Ganges: whether he has really defrauded the Nabób of his rights, or whether the Nabób only makes it a pretence, in order to pillage him, and perhaps deprive him of his government, is very difficult to know; but which ever it is, the Râjah is too well acquainted with Eastern politics to put himself in his enemy's power.

In revenge for this caution, it seems the Nabób encouraged the *Fakirs* to overrun the province, in order to distress the Râjah.

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LETTER LIII.

September 1767.

IT gives me much pleasure that I am now able to give you some account of the Oriental ladies, which would never have been in my power had I remained at Calcutta.

I was lately, with much ceremony, introduced into a great *Mussulman's Zannab*; a favour which they are not very fond of granting to Europeans.

The great man's wives were seated on cushions, cross-legged, as is the custom of the country; the rest of the numerous attendants of females were sitting on the carpet, or standing round.

Even the handsomest of the Mahomedan women have very disagreeable complexions;

plexions; and the fairest amongst them may rather be called more yellow than more white; but they are admired in proportion as they are distant from black: a beauty much esteemed in them is the long-cut eye, and long eye-brows, which most of them have naturally; but the female infants have sometimes the skin at the corner of their eyes cut, to increase their length, and give them more room to play: it must be acknowledged, that there is often a wantonness in the rolling of their eyes; but, exclusive of that, many of the Eastern women have so much beauty in their fine long black eyes, eye-brows, and long black eye-lashes, that if they were set off by a fine red and white complexion they would be incomparable.

They are generally small persons, and delicately made; crookedness is a defect unknown amongst them; and it is said that their black skins have a most delicate softness.

The

The dress, which is not, as in Europe, continually altering to what is called the fashion, but unchangeable, consists of a pair of long straight drawers, of silk, or gold or silver stuff; a sort of gown, called a jemden, mostly of very fine muslin, worked with thread, or gold, or silver; the jemden has very long straight sleeves down to the wrists; and the waist so short that it scarcely reaches below the arms; the skirt is plaited very full, and hangs down upon the ground. It is an exceeding light dress, and scarcely a covering: but the climate requires every thing which contributes to coolness; beside, they are never seen but by one man; their long black hair is parted on the forehead, combed smooth, and hangs down behind: they generally throw a piece of shawl, or silver gauze, over them, which is a sort of veil or cloak.

The jewels they wear are mostly superb; their necks are ornamented with long rows of pearls, mixed with rubies, emeralds,

emeralds, &c.; which jewels are often rough, and holes bored through them, to string as the pearls: they have likewise jewels set as ornaments for their necks, arms, &c.; the workmanship is always clumsy, and the jewels a mixture of bad and good; besides, they mostly spoil their diamonds, by cutting them in flat pieces before they are set; their ear-rings are generally a bunch of loose pearl, which are very ornamental: they wear rings on their fingers and toes; but it is mostly the lowest *casts* of women who have rings in their noses.

The Eastern ladies are not strangers to arts which embellish the person; they wash their hair and eye-brows with a leaf which makes them of a perfect black; and use a black powder, which, with a knife, they convey into their eyes; it rests upon the lower eye-lash, and is said to give life to the eye; they stain the nails of their fingers and toes with red, and paint the palms of their hands and bottoms of their feet.

Their

Their chief employment is bathing, smoaking the hooker, and seeing the girls dance, while others play upon a sort of drum; for no man is admitted within the walls of the *Zanannah*; whatever cannot be performed by the girls, is the business of eunuchs.

Whenever the ladies go out of the *Zanannah*, which is very rare, they are in covered carriages, called *hackries*, drawn by bullocks, with close curtains all round; or else in covered *doolies*, something like a chair, carried by men; so that it is impossible for them to be seen; and it is necessary they should guard against it, for the jealousy of the *Mussulmen* exceeds all bounds; and a woman's being seen by any stranger, particularly an infidel, might cost her no less a penalty than her life.

Confinement cannot be reckoned a misfortune to these women, as they
have

have always been accustomed to it; and besides would be degraded to a level with the lowest people were they to appear in public. Many of them have been married, by the care of their parents, even in their infancy; and the others have mostly been purchased when very young, and brought up in the *Zanannabs*; so that they can know little more of the world than what they see around them.

If a man has ever so many favorites and women, they live together in the *Zanannab*; but sometimes not without jealousy and strife between themselves.

Amongst the Nabóbs and other great people, there is always one woman who takes place of the rest, is dressed with more magnificence, treated with greater respect, and is called the *Bigum*. But it is difficult to determine what it is which entitles them to this pre-eminence; some-
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times

times it is the first wife, but oftener the mother of the first male child.

As the Mahomedan principles do not allow women any share in religion, so of course they have no public share in government, or any other, except the influence of a beautiful face over an ignorant and voluptuous prince.

These poor women, not only are never seen, but, if possible, they are never named out of the *Zanannah*: a Mahomedan never speaks of his wives; and it is thought a very great affront and indelicacy to enquire after them.

The *Zanannahs* of the people of condition have spacious apartments, and gardens with baths and jet d'eaux; but the buildings are heavy and in bad taste: the women enjoy the cool air in the evenings on the terraces; and notwithstanding their aversion to exercise, they
some-

sometimes amuse themselves with swinging in the gardens.

The Indian women have often children at twelve years of age; and by the time they are turned of twenty are thought old women; and are really so in point of beauty; for after fifteen their complexions grow every year darker: the climate, as it hastens their maturity, likewise hastens their decline.

The boys, as well as girls, are kept in the *Zanannah* while they continue young, not however without sometimes going out.

LETTER LIV.

Allahabad, October 1767.

THE diversions in India are but few; the great Moor-men sometimes amuse themselves with hawking; a pastime not very pleasing to Europeans: the company upon these parties go out on elephants, or on horse-back, till they come to some proper place for the sport, which is generally a piece of water or swamp; here the hawks are unhooded by their keepers, and let fly; when a flight of poor harmless birds are upon the wing, the hawk mounts up in the air, and falls unexpectedly upon one of them, which he brings to the ground; he immediately pierces it with his beak, and draws its blood. This is a very expensive diversion, and fit only for a prince. Every hawk has its separate keeper; and the sum they give for a fine bird is incredible.

They

They have sometimes fights between wild beasts, such as tigers, wild elephants, buffaloes, &c. but these are not very common: it is a barbarous amusement, and can give pleasure to none but those who delight in blood.

They have jugglers, posture-masters, fire-eaters, &c.; these fellows are surprisingly dextrous in the postures they throw themselves into; but the rest of the performances are poor and childish.

But the favorite and most constant amusement of the great, both Mahomedans and *Hindoos*, and indeed all ranks of people, is called a *notch*; which is the performance of the dancing girls: every man who can afford it has at least one set of dancing girls, who make part of his *Zanannab*. If they happen to be in favour, they sometimes become of consequence. The mothers of two of the

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late Nabóbs of Muxadabád were originally dancing girls.

It is common to send to Persia, Cashmire, and other countries, to purchase the most beautiful female children; these are fairer than the inhabitants of Hindostán; but have none of that beautiful red which animates and gives life to beauty in colder climates. The Eastern ladies, however, are not without such charms as are pleasing to their countrymen; and there are many proofs that Europeans do not think them altogether intolerable; time and custom reconciles them to the yellow and the black, which at first appears frightful.

When a black man has a mind to compliment an European, he treats him with a *notch*; but on these occasions his favorite women never appear; for they are equally jealous of their concubines as of their wives.

It

It is difficult to give you any proper idea of this entertainment; which is so very delightful, not only to black men, but to many Europeans.

A large room is lighted up; at one end sit the great people who are to be entertained; at the other are the dancers and their attendants; one of the girls who are to dance comes forward, for there is seldom more than one of them dance at a time; the performance consists chiefly in a continual removing the shawl, first over the head, then off again; extending first one hand, then the other; the feet are likewise moved, though a yard of ground would be sufficient for the whole performance. But it is their languishing glances, wanton smiles, and attitudes not quite consistent with decency, which are so much admired; and whoever excels most in these is the finest dancer.

The girl sings, while she is dancing, some Persian or Hindostán song; some of them are really pleasing to the ear, but are almost entirely drowned by the accompaniments: several black fellows stand behind, who likewise sing with all the strength of voice they are masters of, making, at the same time, the most ridiculous grimaces; some of them playing upon a *sitar*, which is something like a guitar, but greatly inferior even to that trifling instrument; others on a sort of drum, or tamborin, usually called *tomtom*; but all this, loud as it is, is drowned by those who play with two pieces of bell-metal, which they work between their fingers, and make the same noise as braziers at work upon a large copper.

The common people hire dancing girls to perform at their *tamashas*: companies of them are often the property of men whose trade it is; any person may purchase one of these girls, for they are bought

bought and sold with as little ceremony as animals.

LETTER LV.

Allahabad, Oct. 1767.

WHEN we reflect on the extreme slowness of the people in Hindostán, and observe how deficient they are in all the sciences, as well as the polished arts of life: when we see that the generality are little superior in knowledge to the brute creation; and that the most learned amongst them have scarcely an idea beyond the country they live in; it is matter of astonishment to see the children lively, active, and of quick understanding.

Little boys and girls are men and women in miniature; their quickness and
vivacity

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vivacity is accompanied with a steadiness and sedateness that would do credit to any period of life ; from the age of seven or eight, to about fourteen, they appear equally free from the follies of childhood and the heavy stupidity which generally comes upon them afterwards. Indeed one may almost say, that in this country infancy is the age of maturity.

The children are brought up here with very little trouble or expence ; the heat of the climate nourishes these little ones ; scarcely any thing more is required but to wash and give them food. The continual nursing and exercise which is given to infants in cold climates, and the dressing and undressing, is unknown in this ; the heat makes clothing entirely unnecessary ; for till the age of four or five they are perfectly naked ; and the excessive perspiration carries off all humours, and answers the purpose of both exercise and physic.

In

In about four months they begin to crawl by themselves ; and are, in every respect, as forward as children of twice that age in cold climates.

The wisdom of Providence has ordained, that the same enervating climate, which renders the women too weak and indolent to endure fatigue in bringing up their off-spring, renders that fatigue unnecessary. And the Indian women seem to be exempt from that part of the curse which the disobedience of Eve brought on our sex : “ *In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.*”

Education, except with some superior *casts* of *Hindoos*, is a thing unthought-of ; therefore food (which, as it is seldom more than rice and water, is extremely cheap) is all the parents have to provide.

In this iron government, where the laborer is never certain of his hire, and is hourly liable to be legally pillaged of
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the small pittance his labor has acquired, were not the necessaries of life confined to a very few things, and the children soon able to shift for themselves, it would be impossible for any but the rich to maintain even one wife and family. The land would be depopulated, and domestic happiness confined to a few.

LETTER LVI.

Allahabad, Oct. 1767.

HOWEVER fatal this climate may be to Europeans, I believe the natives are as free from diseases as the people in any part of the world. They do not live to a great age, but while they live are afflicted with but few disorders; they are weak and enervated, but free from the pain of chronical disorders. Their relaxed frames could not long support them under violent pains,
their

their deaths are generally rather sudden, and mostly occasioned by fevers.

The disorders they are liable to are so few, that much study in physic, and great variety of medicines, seems unnecessary. The art of physic, if it can be called an art in India, consists chiefly in the knowledge of simples, such as hot and cold herbs, hot and cold seeds, &c.

The extreme temperance which, both from the tenets of their religion, and the smallness of their income, the generality of the people are obliged to observe*, saves them from many disorders. The greatest proof of the purity of their blood is the ease with which their wounds are cured, for numberless instances have been seen of *Seapoys*, and others of the natives following the camp, who have been cured of wounds which to an European would be mortal, or at least extremely dangerous, and that with little more than

* All the Hindoos.

binding the wound together, to the astonishment of the English surgeons.

Some of the superior casts of *Hindoos*, who cannot submit to be touched by an European, are cured by their own people that follow the camp, who dress their wounds with the extract of herbs: in short, they are almost self-cured.

Many wounds, which in an European would make an amputation necessary, can in them be cured without; which is very fortunate, for surgery is still less understood than medicine. They are so far from studying anatomy, that the *Hindoos* even conceive horror at the idea of it. They very rarely let blood of their patients, and never but in the greatest extremity.

LETTER LVII.

Allahabad, Oct. 1767.

AFTER the picture I have given you of the indolence and stupidity of the inhabitants of India, it is but just to give some account of that patience and neatness, by which some of their manufactories are brought to such perfection, that Europe can boast of nothing to equal them. The most curious of which are the muslins and filligrane.

Weaving is the employment of the greatest number of the people throughout India; but the greatest manufactory for fine muslins, callicoes, dimities, &c. is at a place called Dacca, in Bengal, and formerly the capital of that province. The exquisite fineness of some of the muslins is inconceivable; for those which are made for the Mogul and his *zanannah* are ten times the price of any
5 allowed

allowed to be made for Europeans or any other merchants.

Embroidery and needlework of all sorts, is likewise brought to the greatest perfection at Dacca. The needlework is all performed by men. Their slowness is intolerable, but their patience is without end.

This extreme slowness is the cause of all the works being excessively expensive; for although the wages of each person is not more than three or four rupees a month; the length of time they are about every piece of work, makes it costly at the end.

They will copy from any pattern you give them with the greatest exactness, but never invent a pattern of their own, nor have they the ingenuity to make any alteration according to the piece they are at work upon; or to dispose of the different sorts of work or colors, so as to form the beauty of the whole.

whole. In short, with the most exquisite neatness, they are utterly devoid of taste.

The finest filligrane is also made at Dacca: this is work which requires great delicacy and patience; it is not perforated like the filligrane made in Europe, but the gold or silver is cut into long pieces like fine threads, and soldered together with such extraordinary neatness, that it is impossible, upon the most curious examination, to discover by what means it is joined. It is extremely light, but still vastly expensive, for the labor costs about ten times as much as the metal.

At Benaras is a great manufactory of gold and silver silks and gauzes: they are very costly from the causes I have before mentioned, and are by no means beautiful in proportion to their price; for they have no method of dressing the silks so as to give them a gloss, nor can they die them of any beautiful colors;

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therefore all the filks manufactured in Hindostán have a peculiar dulness; the gold and silver in them does not make an appearance equal to the quantity, for they know not the art of drawing it out to the excessive fineness requisite for covering the thread.

The chief use made of the filks by the inhabitants is for long drawers, which are worn by both men and women; the silver and gold gauzes are worn by the women in the same manner as they wear a shawl.

In the towns where such goods are made as the company trades in, some of their servants are obliged to be stationed: if it is a considerable factory, there is generally one of the council, and several gentlemen under him, to collect the goods, or rather to get them made; for the work-people seldom begin a piece of cloth, or any other work, till they have part of the money in hand; so that, instead of
pur-

purchasing the goods of the makers, they are obliged to retain vast multitudes of weavers, &c. advancing money before any thing can be done.

The other European companies have likewise their factories; and private merchants, both Europeans and black men, are obliged to collect their goods by the same means, if they chuse to have them from the first hand.

This is the method with the people of all trades: therefore, whatever a person chuses to have made, they must send for the maker, and advance him about half the price, to purchase materials. If it is a silversmith, one must give him the full weight of the piece of plate he is to make, in *rupees*, besides paying in part for his workmanship. In this and all other works they are equally tedious; which is occasioned not only by the natural slowness and indifference with which they go about every thing, but also by

their want of proper tools. The Indians are very bad mechanics ; they do not to this day know the use of a loom, but lay their threads the whole length of the piece of cloth they are to weave. For these reasons, that which might be performed in a few hours, becomes the employment of many days.

One is at a loss which to wonder at most, their patience in completing any piece of work with such tools, or their stupidity in not inventing others ; or lastly, their obstinacy in refusing to adopt a better method when it is pointed out to them ; they content themselves with saying, This is the method my father used, and my grandfather before him ; why then should I alter it?

Neither Mahomedans or *Hindoos* ever change their mode, either in dress, furniture, carriages, or any other thing : therefore invention and improvement are no part of their ideas.

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LETTER LVIII.

Allahabád, Oct. 1767.

YOU are not to understand that my accounts of the people and customs are to be applied to Hindostán in general, but to the country up the Ganges in particular: for although the whole is the empire of the Great Mogul, and the people are every where partly *Hindoos* and partly Mahomedans, and there are many customs which are the same throughout, still there are others that are only local, which cannot be wondered at in such an immense country. And if customs, and even laws, both religious and civil, depend much on climate, situation, &c. one may naturally suppose, that as in this very extensive empire there is difference in the climate, the soil, different productions of the earth

and the like; various necessities have produced different customs.

One material particular is the schism in the *Hindoo* religion: the *Hindoos* of the Decan and Carnatic are guided by the books called the *Vidiam*, as those of the Ganges are by the *Shastab*; and altho' the forms of religion are here numerous and the faith absurd, they are few and rational, when compared with the ceremonies and fables of the *Hindoos* in the southern provinces. India below the Ganges being a peninsula, is great part of it sea coast, besides many islands; and that perhaps is the reason, that there are scarcely any *casts* in those countries except the *Brabmins*, who are not allowed to eat fish, for there are some parts where, if the poorer sort were not permitted that privilege, they must starve, from inability to purchase other food.

The

The climate both on the Coromandel and Malabar coast, is infinitely more cool and healthy than this inland country, being refreshed with breezes from the sea; to which cause I presume it is owing, that the people are more active and more ingenious. The *Hindoo* women are less confined, and appear publicly in the streets, even those of considerable rank.

There are numberless other deviations, which I am not qualified to particularize; therefore I must again observe, that you are not to apply my accounts to all India.

The languages are likewise different, and even upon the Ganges there is some difference in the provinces. In the greatest part of Bengal the dialect is called by the natives *Bengalla*, which is a corruption of that usually called by the English *Moors*. That which we term *Moors*, begins to be spoken with propriety about Cossimbuzár and Muxadabad, but still more

perfectly the higher one advances up the Ganges. All about this country, it is always called *Hindostáney ke boaut*, or the Hindostán language, although it is so far from being the universal tongue, that in many parts the natives would not know what *Hindostáney ke boaut* means, or perhaps, even *Hindoo*, for on the sea coast, and in the province of Bengal, the word is corrupted into *Gentoo*, and many voyagers, particularly the French, have given them the appellation of Gentiles.

The Hindostán language, I mean what we call Moors, is the Indian *Rajpoot* language, mixed with many Arabic, Persian, and Tartar words: it is not surprising, considering the number of Persians and Tartars in this part of India, and the Indian *Rajpoot* is a corruption of the *Sanscrit*, as the Italian is of the Latin.

The universal language in the Mahomedan courts, I believe throughout the empire, is the Persian; in which tongue
all

all business is transacted with the Mogul and Nabóbs; for this reason Persian interpreters are allowed to the Governors, &c. and at present many English gentlemen, both civil and military, apply themselves to the study of that language, which, on account of its great usefulness, is esteemed the sure road to preferment, and will continue so, till numbers make that acquisition less valuable.

The men in this part of India are in general much taller and more robust than those in the province of Bengal, and value themselves upon being better soldiers: many of them, particularly the Persians and Tartars, who are numerous in these parts, have so little title to the appellation we give them of black, that if they were dressed as Europeans, they would differ from such as have been long exposed to this climate, rather as being paler than darker. They do not like to be called black men, and those of the highest rank are in general least so; since they

they have the power to chuse the handsomest wives, and often send for beauties to distant countries, the children naturally partake of their mother's complexion: therefore it is thought extraordinary that the present Great Mogul should be extremely dark, particularly as it is observed, that the race of Tamerlane are mostly fair. Towards Delhi the people are said to be fairer than here, and continue to grow more so in proportion as they are farther from the sun.

They usually call the Europeans *lol addama*, which means red men; and, indeed, it is no very improper appellation for a sun-burnt English-man.

LETTER LIX.

Allahabâd, Oct. 1767.

THE fort, or city, of * Allahabâd is a very large fort; it contains a royal palace, agreeably situated, in a fine country; and has on two sides the rivers Ganges and Jumna; a circumstance which one should naturally suppose, would render it tolerably cool; but, partly from its being in a very hot climate, and partly from the mode of building, it is extremely hot.

In the middle of the palace is a small square, walled round, in the centre of which is a square building, supported by pillars; by a very narrow stair-case you arrive at a small room in the centre, which has four doors, leading into four

* Allahabâd, the Abâd, or city of Allah, or God, known in most maps by the name of Helebas.

little *Varandas* ; by ascending another narrow stair-case you come to a small marble room, which forms a sort of cupola to the building ; this is the highest in the palace, and overlooks all the rest.

The palace contains apartments for the Mogul, a *Durbar*, a *Zanannab*, and an infinite number of different sets of apartments or houses for all the officers of the court and their families.

Each of the houses have a court walled round ; and most of them are built like two houses joined together ; so that the women may be concealed, not only from their neighbours, but from the male domestics of their own family : some of the rooms are large and lofty, and open towards the river ; but at the ends of the large rooms are generally two or three very small ones, dark and low, without the least opening for the admission of light or air ; these are intended to retire to in
the

the heat of the day, when they sleep; for coolness is not to be expected from admitting the air, but by shutting it out till the sun is down: the houses are flat-roofed, with spacious terraces on the tops, open towards the river; but surrounded on the other sides by a wall high enough to prevent their being over-looked; these terraces are extremely agreeable after sun-set, when you are once upon them; but the stair-cases which lead to them are so extremely steep and narrow, that they cannot be ascended without much difficulty and fatigue.

The palace is entirely built of stone hewn out of the rocks on the banks of a distant part of The Ganges, and brought here at a vast expence; it is something like what we call in England Portland-stone, but of a coarser grain, and much more porous.

Besides, they have not the method of giving it a polish; so that it is extremely
rough

rough and unpleasant to the eye, particularly in the insides of the rooms.

Every part of the palace is built with this stone; not only the walls of the houses, but the roofs, the floors, the terraces, the stair-cases, pillars, and supports, of whatever kind, are all cut out of stone: all the squares, passages, &c. &c. are paved with the same; so that, in short, till the English have resided here, there perhaps was not a bit of wood, brick, glass, iron, or any material but stone, to be found throughout the building.

You will easily suppose, from this account, that the palace is not, by any means, light and elegant; the walls, in the lightest part, are about four or five feet in thickness; and as many of the rooms are a sort of octagon, and covered at the top, they are in some parts much thicker; most of the large ones have a great number of niches in the walls, intended

tended to hold lamps for illuminations at their *notches* and *tamashes*.

The thickness of the buildings prevents, for some time, the sun from penetrating; but when it has once penetrated, the stone retains the heat so much, that it is equally hot by night as by day; and after the hot season has been some time set in, every stone contains the heat of a fire, and the reflection from one wall to another renders every part as hot and close as an oven.

Besides, all the long passages throughout the different parts of the palace are very narrow, with high walls, which reflect the heat, and prevent the admission of the air.

All these circumstances together make the fort of Allahabad, in the months of May, June, and July, the hottest place in this part of India; and, indeed, beyond what can be conceived but by experience:

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perience: after the rains have cooled every other place, it is a considerable time before it can penetrate so as to cool these walls.

Besides the palace, there are apartments for a vast number of soldiers.

The only buildings wherein the Mahomedans shew any good taste are the gateways; there are many in this part of the country which have a very handsome appearance. They are lofty enough to admit an elephant with an howder, and wide in proportion; therefore the massiveness of the stone work, which in smaller buildings would be clumsy, in them appears grand. The great gate of this fort, which fronts the country, crowned with turrets and ornaments in proportion to its vastness, is a very striking and noble piece of architecture.

Near Allahabád are several garden-houses and baths, formerly belonging

to some of the retainers to the court; and many mosques scattered about: the country round is fertile and pleasant, but extremely hot and unhealthy in the season. After the rains, which are over about October, it begins to grow very cold, which continues for about three or four months; during which time it is a very delightful climate.

The natives have a prodigious opinion of this fort; it is surrounded by a very thick wall, and strong fortifications; and, till it was taken by the English, was deemed an impregnable place. They say, according to their hyperbolic way of expressing themselves, that the building of it cost three crores, three lacks, three thousand three hundred and three rupees, three annas, and three pice.

LETTER LX.

Allahabad, Nov. 1767.

IF it was always the cold season, who would dislike India? it is really delightful! the rains are over, and not a cloud is to be seen in the sky; the air is fresh, and the sun, which shines without intermission, gives a warmth which is perfectly agreeable; in every part of the country the earth shoots forth its abundance; vegetation is so quick, that the eye may almost perceive it; and the plains, which not a week since appeared to be only sand, are now covered with different kinds of grain, grown up to such a height as entirely to alter the face of the country, as if by the power of enchantment. And the bed of The Ganges, which so lately, from the walls of the fort, as far as the eye could reach, was one entire sheet of water, now shews
the

the ripening corn, almost ready for the reaper's hand.

Health, strength, and vivacity, begin to return to those who lingered through the hot season; and the cold, which in the evenings and mornings is really sharp, braces up the nerves, which the intense heat had relaxed; for although this is the hottest place we know of in the hot season, it is likewise the coldest.

In this season the country round Allahabad abounds in variety of fruits and vegetables: the two rivers supply us with excellent fish, and the fields with game in abundance of almost every species and kind; of the quadruped, venison, hares, wild hogs; of the feathered race, peacocks, wild ducks, wild geese, partridges, beccaficos, green pigeons, and a variety of others, peculiar to the country, all excellent of their kind, and in great plenty.

The weather continues fine for near three months after the rains, when it begins to grow intensely hot; and the face of the earth changes from fertile green to burning sands.

LETTER LXI.

Allahabad, Nov. 1767.

THE water of The Ganges, in the belief of the *Hindoos*, both the followers of the *Vidiam* and *Shastab*, is every where holy; but in some parts it is extremely venerated; Beneras is one of these places, perhaps on account of the university of *Brahmins* there; and in general it is more valued the nearer to the pass by which it enters (from the country of Thibet), through the mountains which form the barrier to Hindostán, and which the Indians believe to be the source of the river.

But

But particularly the meeting of the two rivers, where The Jumna discharges itself into The Ganges, has for time immemorial been esteemed by the *Hindoos* a blessed water: happy was the person who could receive a little of it; but supremely so the man who could bathe himself in it: and many were the pilgrimages from the most remote parts of Hindostán.

But long had the distraction of the empire, the impositions and cruelties of petty tyrants, incursions of *Mahrattors*, and other causes, deprived them of the power to perform this journey in safety.

As the English troops are now dispersed throughout the country, their fear is banished; and it is amazing to see the multitudes who take the opportunity of the cold season to travel on foot from the most distant provinces to enjoy this blessed water.

This occasions a sort of fair on the banks of the rivers, where the merchants expose their goods to sale.

It is a moving landscape of grotesque figures; for the natives of the southern parts of India, being unused to cold, cannot bear this season at Allahabád; therefore they cover themselves with blankets and quilts of various colours, to defend them from the weather.

This superstition of the *Hindoos* brings in a revenue to the Mogul, who lays a tax on the bathers, and appoints an officer, who presides at the river-side; and when the pilgrims have filled little glass vials which they bring with them, he puts on his seal, that there may be no deceit. These vials of water they carry into their own country, and sell at an advantage.

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LETTER LXII.

Allahabad, March 1768.

REFLECTING on the customs and usages in this country, I cannot help comparing them with many of those in ancient times. There is certainly a great analogy between the present and ancient manners in the east; which undoubtedly the particular religion, and unchangeable customs of the *Hindoos*, have greatly contributed to preserve.

The Mahomedan conquerors of the country are likewise from eastern nations; and their prophet in his laws retained much of the Jewish religion, particularly circumcision, the prohibition of swine's flesh, and plurality of wives.

It was not accounted unto David as a sin to have many wives; but when he took the wife of Uriah the Hittite, the

anger of the Lord was kindled against him. And in Hindostán, although polygamy and an unlimited number of concubines are allowed, it is contrary to the law of both *Hindoos* and Mahomedans to take away the wife of another man, and is looked upon as the greatest of transgressions.

The women as of old bring no dowers to their husbands, but are often purchased; and a man's wives are a part of his fortune and estate.

The custom of bathing, as we learn from the story of David and many others, was usual; and the Mahomedans idea of purifications and uncleanness, are nearly the same as the Jews.

The ancient custom of anointing themselves with precious oils is one of the present luxuries, and attended with considerable expence. The oil of roses, of sweet woods, and of all kinds of spices, are brought from Persia. The great men
present

present it to each other in their visits, and rub their faces and beards with it. The ladies in the *zanannabs* perfume themselves with it, and even the common people rub themselves with oils of inferior sorts.

The Indian women, particularly the dancing girls, wear ornaments on their ancles, with little bells, or tinkling pieces of metal; and jewels in their noses; both which ornaments we find were worn by the Daughters of Israel two thousand five hundred years ago.

The bedsteads, or rather stands, which are used by the people here, are only made of Bamboo, and bound together with the bark or leaves of trees, so light that a child may lift them; these they carry about, and sleep on them, without any bed-clothes, either in the air or under shelter, according to the season. I cannot help thinking they are exactly the same as were used at Capernaum,

naum, when our Saviour said unto the man sick of the palsy, "*Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*"

When any of the people are disordered in their senses, they do not attribute the cause of it to a fever, or any thing constitutional, or to distress of mind; but call it the devil; the devil tempts a man to commit outrages, to lay violent hands on himself or others, the devil throws him into a fit.

I should think it necessary to make an apology for these observations, if I did not look upon them as so many instances of the universality and unchangeableness of many of the customs in the East.

LETTER LXIII.

Allahabád, March 1768.

THE heat now begins to return, and the fort of Allahabád will soon be intolerable. The freshness of the morning and evening is no more. The moskittos and flies begin to recover their tormenting sting, and perpetually surround and teaze us with their bites; even in the cold season we are not entirely free from them, but in the hot and rainy seasons they abound all over India, more particularly in these parts; it is impossible to sleep in the day-time, or even to dine in comfort without having servants with fans to keep them off. The flying bug is very offensive to the smell; but there are little luminous insects called by the English fire-flies, which are to be seen in multitudes every evening, illuminating the trees, &c. with great beauty.

Cock-

Cock-roaches are numerous and troublesome ; and the bats, which are prodigiously large, fly into the rooms, and sometimes alight on people's heads, fixing their claws in their hair, so that it is impossible to extricate them without taking part of the hair also.

The winged creatures are not the only ones we are infested with, venomous animals of various sorts abound here, scorpions, and spiders larger than scorpions, centapieds, &c.

A very large species of rats, called *bandidcoots*, run about the houses without fear. The musk-rat is an inoffensive little animal, covered with a white soft down, but is very destructive to wines, tea, &c. which is often spoiled by them in great quantities, for one of them running over a box of tea, or biting the corks of wine bottles, is sufficient to spoil it, so strong is its perfume.

The

The little white lizards with a transparent skin, which are seen in the houses mostly in the rainy season, are harmless, but disagreeable both to the sight and the touch.

In some places there are such myriads of little black ants, that it is necessary to set the feet of the bedsteads in pans of water, to keep the beds from being overrun with them. The white ant answers something to a moth; these are most destructive animals to cloaths, furniture, and even buildings.

The larger animals, such as elephants, camels, and buffaloes; the tigers, leopards, wolves, &c. which infest the forests, and alligators, those monsters of the Ganges, are too well known to need any description.

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LETTER LXIV.

Calcutta, May 1768.

WE left Allahabád early in March; a season in which the river is very much fallen; and, after making short visits by the way, to Benaras, Patna, Monghier, Cassambuzár, Chandanagóre, and Chinchura, arrived at Calcutta the latter end of April. We travelled all the way in *budgeroos*, having the good fortune to find the river not too dry to be passable.

Chandanagóre and Chinchura, the first a French, and the last a Dutch settlement, are about a day's journey up the river from Calcutta; and so near each other that the inhabitants are constantly visiting from one town to the other in their *palenqueens*.

Nothing

Nothing can be more different than these two neighbouring towns, except their inhabitants. Chandanagóre, in the late war, was taken by the English men of war under the command of admiral Watson, and the town has not yet recovered its appearance, nor have its inhabitants recovered their fortunes: but they are gay, vain, and happy.

Chinchura, on the contrary, is an excessive pretty town, regularly built, regularly governed; the inhabitants rich, thrifty, and dull; in short, a Dutch town, and Dutch people.

The Dutch despise the frivolity of the French, the French ridicule the clumsiness of the Dutch.

But, amongst those who call themselves French and Dutch at these places; very few, amongst the women particularly, are really so, being most of them

country-born; there are likewise many of these who are called English, because they are married to English-men, or live under an English government.

These country-born women are the descendants of an European father, and what is called a Portuguese mother (which people I have before given you some account of); the boys we seldom hear any thing about; but the girls, who are sometimes born in wedlock, and sometimes not, as they are fairer than their mothers, are fond of being called English, French, &c.; and, if pretty, often marry to Europeans, who sometimes arise to be people of consequence; their children, being another remove from black, do not like to have their descent remembered; and nothing is so great an affront as to class them amongst the Portuguese; although, from education and example, and perhaps from constitution, they often retain the indolence and cunning

ning peculiar to the natives of this country.

LETTER LXV.

Calcutta, June 1768.

I THINK I have never given you any account of the town of Calcutta; indeed, after Madras, it does not appear much worthy describing; for although it is large, with a great many good houses in it, and has the advantage of standing upon the banks of a river *, it is as awkward a place as can be conceived; and so irregular, that it looks as if all the houses had been thrown up in the air, and fallen down again by accident as they now stand: people keep constantly building; and every one who can procure a piece of ground to build

* An arm of The Ganges, called the river Hugly.

T

a house

a house upon, consults his own taste and convenience, without any regard to the beauty or regularity of the town; besides, the appearance of the best houses is spoiled by the little straw huts, and such sort of encumbrances, which are built by the servants for themselves to sleep in: so that all the English part of the town, which is the largest, is a confusion of very superb and very shabby houses, dead walls, straw huts, warehouses, and I know not what.

The most like a street is the *Buzar*, the name they call every place by where any thing is to be sold; the *Buzar* is full of little shabby-looking shops, called *Boutiques*; they are kept by black people. The English seldom visit these places themselves, but depend on their *Banians*, and other servants, for the purchase of every thing; indeed if they do not it is much the same, for at all events they are sure to be cheated.

About

About the middle of the town, on the river's edge, stands the old fort, memorable for the catastrophe of the Black Hole, so much talked of in England; it was in one of the apartments in it that the wretched sufferers were confined. The fort is now made a very different use of; the only apology for a church is in some of the rooms in it, where divine service is sometimes performed.

In a distinct part of the town reside the Armenians, and the people called Portuguese; each of these have their own churches; and the Portuguese keep up the processions and pageantry of the Romish church, as far as they are permitted; but are obliged to perform it all within their own walls. The chief connexion we have with these people is, employing some of the women as servants, or the men as writers, or sometimes cooks.

The Armenian women we have not the least connexion with; but the men are often employed by merchants to carry on trade, or collect goods in different parts of India; and are called *Go-mastabs*. They trade likewise, by permission of the company, on their own accounts; and some few of them are rich. But their language, appearance, customs, and manners, are so different from ours, that an acquaintance with them is impossible. The dress of the women is something like the Mahomedans, as they wear long drawers, and a sort of gown or vest over them; but their heads are covered with turbands of a prodigious size: one part of their dress is very extraordinary, and, I believe, peculiar to the Armenians; this is called a mouth-cloth, a piece of muslin, which comes from under the chin, and is tyed strait above the upper lip: this every woman puts on as soon as she is married. I do not know enough of the Armenians to tell

tell you the origin of this custom ; but I am told, that the heat it occasions from the breath being so confined, often causes a disagreeable humour about the mouth and chin, and likewise occasions an offensive breath.

Here is not, as at Madrafs, a black town near for the servants of the English to reside in ; therefore Calcutta is partly environed by their habitations, which makes the roads rather unpleasant ; for the huts they live in, which are built of mud and straw, are so low that they can scarcely stand upright in them ; and, having no chimnies, the smoke of the fires with which they dress their victuals, comes all out at the doors, and is perhaps more disagreeable to the passenger than to themselves.

The new fort, an immense place, is on the river side about a mile below the town. If all the buildings which are in-

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tended within its walls, are finished, it will be a town within itself; for besides houses for the engineers and other officers who reside at Calcutta, there are apartments for the company's writers, barracks for soldiers, magazines for stores, &c.

The town of Calcutta is likewise daily increasing in size, notwithstanding which, the English inhabitants multiply so fast, that houses are extremely scarce: as I have given you a description of the houses at Madras, I need only say, that these are much in the same stile, only they have not the beautiful channam; for although they have had the same shells brought from the coast of Coromandel, and have mixed them with the same materials, and in the same manner, it has not the least of that fine gloss which is there so greatly admired; this is owing to all the water in Bengal partaking so much of the salt-petre with which the earth is in every part impregnated.

Paper,

Paper, or wainscot, are improper, both on account of the heat, the vermin, and the difficulty of getting it done; the rooms are therefore all whited walls, but plastered in pannels, which has a pretty effect; and are generally ornamented with prints, looking-glasses, or whatever else can be procured from Europe; the floors are likewise plaster, covered all over with fine matt, which is nailed down; for although carpets are manufactured in some parts of the country, they are such an addition to the heat, that they are seldom made use of; the rooms are few, but mostly very large and lofty; many of the new-built houses have glass-windows, which are pleasant to the eye, but not so well calculated for the climate as the old ones, which are made of cane,

Furniture is so exorbitantly dear, and so very difficult to procure, that one seldom sees a room where all the chairs and couches are of one sort; people of the

first consequence are forced to pick them up as they can, either from the captains of European ships, or from China, or having some made by the blundering carpenters of the country, or send for them to Bombay, which are generally received about three years after they are bespoke; so that those people who have great good luck, generally get their houses tolerably well equipped by the time they are quitting them to return to England.

Beds, or, as they are always called, cotts, are no very expensive part of furniture; the wood-work, which is exceedingly slight, is made to take in pieces; the furniture is either gauze or muslin, made to put on all at once; and people sleep on a thin mattrafs or quilt; one sheet, and two or three pillows, complete the bedding; so that when it is taken in pieces the whole lays in a small compass, and is easily removed from one place to another: whenever people travel, they always carry their beds with them.

In

In the country round the town, at different distances, are a number of very pretty houses, which are called garden-houses, belonging to English gentlemen: for Calcutta, besides its being a large town, is not esteemed a healthy spot; so that in the hot season all those who can, are much at these garden-houses, both because it is cooler and more healthy.

A little out of the town is a clear airy spot, free from smoke or any encumbrances, called the *Corse*, (because it is a road the length of a *corse*, or two miles), in a sort of ring, or rather angle, made on purpose to take the air in, which the company frequent in their carriages about sun-set, or in the morning before the sun is up.

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LETTER LXVI.

Calcutta, July 1768.

THE division of the Indians into *casts* is the cause of great inconveniencies and expence to the English, as it obliges them to hire three-times the number of servants which would otherwise be necessary; for none of them, even on the greatest emergency, will perform the most trifling office which does not belong to their particular *cast*.

The first servant is called a *Banian*; he is at the head of all the business, but if it is considerable, he has two or three *Banians* or * *Sarcárs* under him.

The next is a *Butler Connah Sarcár*; his office is to take an account of all the money expended for provisions, to pay

* *Sarcár*, a lower cast of *Banians*, so called.

the

the butchers, bakers, &c. and answers to a clerk of the kitchen; the next is a *Consummah*, who is the house-keeper, he has under him a *compradóre*, who goes to market: the *compradóre* buys all small articles for the table, and gives his account to the butler *connah sarcár*; the next is a butler, who is an assistant to the *consummah*.

The other servants, who wait at table, or take care of a gentleman's cloaths, &c. are called *Kisimagars*. The *Peádars* usually called *Peons* run before your *pálenqueen* and carry messages. The *bearers* are the chairmen, it is necessary for every person in a family to have six or eight of them, the lower casts of *bearers* take their turn to carry the * *mussall* before the *pálenqueen*; but the superior *casts* who are cleaner and more creditable will not condescend to touch it, therefore to every set of bearers it is necessary to have at least two boys of a low *cast* called *Mussall Chies*.

* A sort of Torch,

The

The *bearers* business, besides carrying the *palenqueen*, is to bring water to wash after dinner, &c. one brings an ewer with water, and pours it over your hands, another gives you a towel, but it must be a *Muffall Chie*, or a slave, who holds the *chillumchee*, for the *bearer* would be disgraced by touching any thing which contains the water after one has washed with it.

A cook in a family will have at least one assistant, if not more, and every horse you keep must have a *scice* and a grass-cutter.

The *hooker badár* will do nothing but dress a *hooker*, and attend his master while he smokes it.

These servants are all men ; and often the only woman in a family is the *Matrannee*, a *Hallicore*, who sweeps the
6 rooms,

rooms, and does all the dirty offices which the others will not condescend to.

The servants who attend in a lady's apartment are generally slave girls, or Portuguese women; and the nurses for children are Portuguese.

The gardeners are called *Mollies*; like all the other people, many hands do but little work: the men who bring water for the gardens, and other purposes, are called *Busties*; they carry the water in large leathern bags slung over their backs, at one corner of which there is a sort of spout, which they bring under the right arm; by that means they water the gardens, and throw it wherever else it is necessary.

The taylor's who make your linen are monthly servants; the slowness of these men can be equalled by nothing but their stupidity. All the linen is washed by men, who are paid by the month.

A Der-

A *Derwán's* business is to stand at the outward door, to announce visitors ; but they are not generally kept, as a *Peon*, or *Chubdár*, will do that office.

* *Chubdárs* are men who carry a long silver stick, and do nothing but go before a palenqueen, carry messages, or announce visitors. Keeping *Chubdárs* is a piece of state allowed by the black people only to officers of dignity in the state ; and by the English is confined to the council and field officers.

The *Banian's* wages is the most considerable, and depends on the situation of his master. The wages of the other servants differ according to their quality : a *Consummah*, Cook, &c. have thirty,

* These silver-stick men, who are intended to silence the mob, and impress them with an idea of their master's dignity, obtain their title of *Chubdár* from the word *Chub*, which, in the language of the country, means silence.

twenty,

twenty, or ten *rupees* a month; the others less; and some of the lowest order not more than three or four *rupees*.

None of the servants ever eat, drink, or sleep, in their master's house; nor will either *Hindoos* or *Mahomedans* eat of any thing which goes from their master's table.

It is impossible to avoid this inconvenience of a multitude of servants; for if you lessen the number but one, they have a thousand tricks to distress you; and from your head *Banian* to the lowest *Mussall Cbie* in your family, all are combined to oblige you to keep the number which they deem proportioned to your rank.

As their master rises in life, they insist upon more Cooks, more *Peons*, more *Kissmagars*, more *Bearers*, &c. The consequence of a refusal is, that those he wants most, particularly *Bearers*, will run away; and the *Banian*, who is in
7 the

the secret, makes so many difficulties in getting others, and has so many well-feigned excuses, and so many artful tricks to make his master feel the want of them, that although people are sensible of the fraud, they are obliged to comply with what their servants call *custom*, to save themselves the numberless vexations they would otherwise occasion. Most of the servants besides insist upon raising their wages in proportion to their master's rank. This they likewise tell him is *all time custom*, a favorite expression with the *Banians*; and, in their opinion, a sufficient reason for any thing.

LETTER LXVII.

Calcutta, Sept. 1768.

BEFORE I take my leave of India, you will naturally expect me to say something of the English, who are now so numerous in the country.

As the Hindoos were heretofore under the Mahomedan government, both Mahomedans and Hindoos, in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixá, are now under the government of the English.

Calcutta is the presidency; the governor, assisted by the council, has the direction of all the company's affairs; which is not merely the superintending of their commerce, but the governing of three rich and extensive provinces; the direction of a powerful army; making alliances with the princes of other provinces,

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vinces, or declaring war against them, as they judge most conducive to the advantage of the company, under whose direction they act; but, on account of the distance from the mother country, much must always be left to their own discretion.

The council are twelve in number; the other civil servants of the company are senior and junior merchants, factors, and writers, who rise in progression according to their standing in the service. The merchants who have leave to settle in India, without any employment under the company, are called free merchants.

It is unnecessary to make any observations on the manners of English people; therefore I shall only mention such customs as, from the heat of the climate, and other causes, are peculiar to this country.

As

As the morning and evening is cooler than the day, it is usual to rise early, and sit up rather late ; for after the morning the heat is so intense, that it is difficult to attend to any business, and hardly possible to take any amusement. Ladies mostly retire to their own apartments, where the slightest covering is scarcely supportable. The most active disposition must be indolent in this climate.

After dinner every one retires to sleep ; it is a second night ; every servant is gone to his own habitation ; all is silence : and this custom is so universal, that it would be as unseasonable to call on any person at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, as at the same time in the morning.

This custom of sleeping away the hottest hours in the day is necessary, even to the strongest constitution. After this re-

pose people dress for the evening, and enjoy the air about sun-set in their carriages, &c. The rest of the evening is for society.

Living is very expensive, on account of the great rents of houses, the number of servants, the excessive price of all European commodities, such as wines, clothes, &c. The perspiration requires perpetual changes of clothes and linen; not to mention the expences of palanquins, carriages, and horses.

Many of these things, which perhaps appear luxuries, are, in this climate, real necessities of life.

It is remarkable that those Europeans who have health enjoy a greater flow of spirits than in cooler climates.

Except when parties are violent, which is sometimes the case, the society and hospitality is general; and there is no other

other part of the world where people part with their money to assist each other so freely as the English in India.

LETTER LXVIII.

St. Helena, Feb. 1769.

THIS is a country different from all others; and of a most singular appearance.

A high rock, which seems just started out of the sea, of a vast height, and almost perpendicular on all parts except one, where the ground is low, the shore flat, and the rock open as if it had been cleft in two; so that it forms a little harbour, with good anchorage for the shipping.

This opening, which the inhabitants call the valley, continues a considerable

way into the island ; and in it the town is built, which is clean and pretty ; the houses in the English taste ; and if it was not for the rock which encloses it, would be even more like an English country town than the Cape of Good Hope. The rock arises on each side of the valley to a prodigious height, and so steep that it appears impossible to ascend it ; and really would be entirely so on one side, if the inhabitants had not cut a road ; which, by being zig-zag, and the turnings very short, render it less steep than it would otherwise be : but it is still such, that I think it is dangerous for any but the natives to venture upon this road on horse-back.

When one stands in the valley, the people who ride up the side of the rock seem (like the figures on a China paper) flying in the air ; for there is no appearance of a road till you are upon it ; and when you are, it is so narrow, that if by any accident your horse was to throw
you,

you, you must inevitably be precipitated to the valley : but the little horses which they have here are so used to the path, and so sure-footed, that few accidents happen ; and even the ladies ride up with as little fear as on plain ground. Sedan chairs are sometimes made use of, which is an easy method of ascending the hill ; but the coming down is extremely disagreeable, unless you are brought backward, which makes it quite easy.

The top of the rock, in distinction from the valley, is called the country : but such a country ! such a barren desolate appearance, as perhaps no other inhabited place affords ; occasioned chiefly by the want of soil, and partly by the multitude of rats.

In those parts where there is a sufficient depth of earth, the inhabitants have little farms and gardens, which

supply them with fruits and vegetables, though in no great plenty. Corn they have none but what they are supplied with from Europe; although many attempts have been made use of to raise it; but it either does not take root for want of soil, or the rats destroy it. Most of the people usually eat yams instead of bread, which are here very good.

The country is so little able to supply its inhabitants with the necessaries of life, that if the ship which annually stops in its way to India, and brings them corn, &c. &c. was to meet with any accident, they would be in the greatest danger of famine. Their best resource in such a situation would be the fish, which undoubtedly must be plentiful, as they are surrounded by the sea.

On account of the scarcity of fodder, there are but few cattle kept; and those that are, are so far at the disposal of the governor,

governor, that no person can kill one of his own beasts without the governor's order ; nor, when it is killed, dispose of it but according to his direction ; which is to procure every family on the island a proper quantity. All kinds of provision indeed are obliged to be managed with œconomy, to prevent a scarcity.

Whenever any English ship arrives, the island is obliged to provide the captain with at least one bullock for fresh provision : but they often take a greater quantity of salt meat than they give of fresh.

Indeed, it is not a place to expect plenty of refreshments ; and to those who are just come from the Cape of Good Hope, which is often the case, the contrast in point of plenty and scarcity appears very striking.

The India Company are so far from being enriched by this place, that the
keeping

keeping of it costs them a considerable sum yearly; but, as they have no other possessions in this part of the world, it is of great use for their ships to water at; particularly in time of war, when it might be dangerous for them to put in at The Cape.

The island is fortified at the landing place ; and at another place, a short distance, where they think that an enemy, if it was worth their while might make an attempt, they have lately erected a small fort ; but all the rest of the island is better fortified by nature than it could possibly be by art ; being the most insurmountable of all rocks. Nevertheless, a little army of three or four companies is always kept here.

The governor has a yearly salary of five hundred pounds; and, they say, without any perquisites, except that every expence of his family is found him by the company; including a town and country-

country-house, horses, servants, and provisions of every kind whatever.

There is a deputy governor, and three or four gentlemen, called the council. Most of the other inhabitants, except the army, live by the produce of their farms, and by boarding the captains, passengers, &c. of the India ships; for there is nothing worthy the name of trade in the place. They are entirely prevented from entering into any foreign trade by an express order from the company at home, which prohibits the building or keeping any ship; not even a bark, or any vessel larger than a common boat, is allowed to belong to the island. Sometimes they gain a little by purchasing goods from one ship, and selling them to others, which come from different ports in India.

Although all the people, except the slaves, are called English, I believe the greatest part of them never saw the mother country; and being confined to a small society,

society, with no other variety than what is afforded them by the India ships stopping in the port, their knowledge must consequently be confined, and their ideas but few; nevertheless, there is great decency of manners and appearance; at least while any ships are here, the time in which they all set themselves off to the best advantage.

After what I have said of the sterility of the country, you will not be surprised to hear that the people are in general poor. Their harvest is the time the ships stop, and the greatest advantages they have is from them.

The most agreeable circumstance appertaining to this island is the climate, which, notwithstanding its being between the tropics, is really fine: from the height of the rock, and its being surrounded by the sea, the heat is very moderate, and the air perfectly clear and healthy: a proof of it is, that the women have as fine complexions as in any part

of the world ; a beauty peculiarly striking to all people who are come from India. Another remarkable circumstance, which is likewise in favour of beauty, is, that the small pox is a disorder known only by name : and they tell you, that every native of this island who goes to any other country, and catches it in the natural way, certainly dies ; but, by inoculation, they generally recover : and I can readily believe, that most of those who are prepossessed with this opinion, will die if they should catch it in the natural way.

THE END.

E R R A T A.

Page 62. Line 6. *for* the last we came from, *read*
the last place we came from

P. 68. L. 13. *for* lays, *r.* lies

P. 80. L. 9. *for* palengneens, *r.* palenqueens

P. 95. L. 15. *for* Badgeroo, *r.* Budgeroo

P. 95. 123. 135. 244. *for* lay, *r.* lie

P. 102. L. 23. *for* may, *r.* many

P. 104. L. 15. *for* Sancrit, *r.* Sanscrit

P. 127. L. 6. *for* permitted the honour, *r.* per-
mitted to have the honour

P. 134. L. 10. *for* help, *r.* bar

P. 138. L. 23, *for* loiz, *r.* loix

P. 171. L. 14. *for* convesion, *r.* conversion

P. 174. L. 6. *for* what, *r.* who

P. 192. L. 8. *for* favour, *r.* power

P. 194. L. 15. *for* each reaches down, *r.* reaches
down

P. 245. L. 7. *for* parly, *r.* partly

